



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Higher education in the 21st century

A student perspective

A study undertaken at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO and as part of the Organisation's 50th anniversary celebrations by student NGOs of the Collective Consultation on Higher Education.

Paris, 1996

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FOREWORD

As part of its observance of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations system, UNESCO launched a worldwide debate amongst students in higher education. They were invited to undertake a critical analysis to ascertain how universities and other institutions of higher learning were preparing them for their roles as citizens and professionals in the 21st century. Thus, the quality and relevance of higher education today were scrutinized by the major stakeholders themselves who will be the leaders and experts in tomorrow's society.

The present report articulates the main issues and conclusions of this debate which involved some 11 international student NGOs representing over 400,000 members and 190 unions and federations in all regions of the world. This document is an eloquent testimony to their aspirations and concerns for their social and professional futures.

The United Nations was established some 50 years ago to rebuild a world torn by anguish and destruction into a global society where peace and sustainable development would benefit all peoples. The climate of despair would become one of lasting hope and prosperity. Sadly, the present generation has not succeeded in attaining these very worthwhile goals which still, nevertheless, underpin the development process. In this regard, the young are experiencing an acute sense of disillusionment and hence seek meaningful directions for their lives.

Education is considered a key instrument which can assist both individuals and nations to shape their destinies, based on the universal principles of social justice. In this process, higher education has a unique role to play in that it prepares skilled human resources for a society where advanced knowledge and know-how are the essential forces directing social and economic growth. But this sub-sector is enduring an ongoing crisis in all regions of the world as governments reduce resources while questioning the real returns of this investment for the community.

Students are at the epicentre of this turmoil. On one hand, they expect their tertiary studies to help develop their qualities as citizens in a changing world. On the other hand, they are aware of the need to acquire even more sophisticated professional skills to equip themselves for a complex labour market because employment has become all too frequently an elusive goal for many governments. Moreover, students today are required to invest heavily in their own futures - hence their social and professional concerns are totally justified. Their reflection on their choice of studies, on the quality and relevance of the current curriculum offered and on the methods used to convey this knowledge constitutes a thought-provoking analysis of higher education on the eve of the 3rd millennium.

UNESCO accords a significant place to the voice of youth and believes that this appraisal of higher education by students from all regions should find a wide audience amongst national policy-makers and the academic community. The depth of this debate clearly illustrates that the international student community is well aware of the grave issues involved in the development process and is ready to play its full role in the search for lasting solutions. For this reason, we should be encouraged by the dedication and promise of the next generation.

I should like to thank my colleague Dr Mary-Louise Kearney who co-ordinates the UNESCO/NGO Collective Consultation for her assistance in the organization of this activity, and Miss Sumita Vasudeva, former Vice-President (Programmes) of AIESEC for her help in preparing the student report.

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Director
Division of Higher Education

PARTICIPATING NGOs

AEGEE (Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe)

Membership: 16,000 members in 170 university towns

Debate: "Academy on Education and Discrimination", Copenhagen, 24-26 November 1995

AIIESEC (International Association of Students in Economics and Management)

Membership: 70,000 members in 87 countries

Debates:

- the European Congress (Bucharest, Romania, 18-25 August 1995);
- the Americas Congress 1995 "Developing Global Leaders" (Ottawa, Canada, 19-27 August 1995);
- the Asia Pacific Congress (Auckland, New Zealand, 26 August - 1 September 1995)

ELSA (European Law Students' Association)

Membership: 25,000 members in 41 countries

Debate: The XXVIIIth International Council Meeting, Nottingham, United Kingdom, 9-16 September 1995

IAAS (International Association of Agricultural Students)

Membership: 100,000 in 45 countries*

Debate: General Assembly 1995, Roskilde, Denmark, 21-23 July 1995

IFMSA (International Federation of Medical Students Associations)

Membership: 610,000 in 68 countries

Debate: General Assembly, Barcelona, Spain, 5-10 August 1995

IFSA (International Forestry Students Association)

Membership: 44 local or national associations in 31 countries

Debate: 23rd International Forestry Students Symposium, Helsinki, Finland, 10-17 September 1995

IPSF (International Pharmaceutical Students Federation)

Membership: 180,000 members in 40 countries

Debate: 41st IPSF Congress, Accra, Ghana, 13-22 August 1995

IUS (International Union of Students)

Membership: 118 unions worldwide

JECI (Jeunesse Etudiante Catholique Internationale)

Membership: spans 92 countries*

MIEC (Mouvement International des Etudiants Catholiques)

Membership: 72 federations worldwide

Debates:

- Session JECI-MIEC du Moyen-Orient, Beirut, Lebanon, 18-25 July 1995;
- "The Crisis of the African Universities", Cotonou, Benin, 21-26 July 1995;
- International Study Session: "Education as a Factor of Social Integration for a Fairer World- Our Role as Social Actors", Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 July - 12 August 1995

WSCF (World Student Christian Federation)

Membership: 300.000 / 80 countries*

Debates:

- WSCF University Consultation, Bangkok, Thailand, 1-8 April 1995
- The XXXI General Assembly, Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, September 1995

* Source: *Yearbook of International Organizations*, 1993-1994, Vol. 1, Ed. Union of International Associations.

Executive Summary

- The 50th Anniversary of the founding of UNESCO constitutes an occasion to reflect on all facets of the Organizations's specific mandate in education, science, culture and communication. Since higher education is a particular concern for the Director-General, he invited student NGOs of the Collective Consultation on Higher Education to present their point of view on current issues affecting this sector. The present report is the result of that analysis.
- The first section contrasts the expected vision of higher education with the reality experienced by students who are preparing for their future lives and professions. It is essential that students feel satisfied with the quality and relevance of their education and training. Thus, the reasons for their choice of discipline, the content of their curriculum and the ways in which they learn deserve merit close scrutiny. However, the higher education sector is now undergoing profound changes due to the increased demand for access, reductions in public funding, diversification of institutions and courses, growing internationalization and the persistence of the employment crisis in many countries. These factors shape the actual experience of higher education, which might therefore be markedly different from students' expectations.
- Against this climate of change, the student reflection gives particular emphasis to certain urgencies for higher education, notably the status of the professoriate, access for marginalized peoples and equal opportunities for women. These are important if higher education is to make its full contribution to the overall goals of sustainable human development and peace. Each of these urgencies attest to the need to ensure that issues such as equity and access must be sought within the overall framework of quality and relevance which are the twin objectives of higher education.
- Partnerships received special attention during the reflection which analysed the co-operation amongst the stakeholders in higher education. Today, traditional structures are under review and investment in tertiary studies is becoming the responsibility of young people themselves. Thus, the student community is emerging as a powerful partner and must play its full role in bringing about positive and equitable change within the sector.
- The reflection attests to the strength and importance of the student voice. These young people will be the social and professional leaders of tomorrow. The intention of this report is both to express their views and to encourage their further collaboration with other stakeholders in higher education. To this end, six specific proposals are listed.

I. Introduction

And For These Ends...

to practise tolerance and live

together in peace with one

another as good neighbours...

-Charter of the United Nations

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations constitutes an occasion for reflection both on the events leading to the creation of this institution and on its role in society at the eve of the third millennium. According to the report on Global Governance entitled *Our Global Neighbourhood*, the Charter of the United Nations is the world's most important document. It offers a convincing description of the circumstances which, by virtue of their tragic impact, exhorted the nations of the world to design, together, a new vision of their common future:

"The Charter of the United Nations was written while the world was still engulfed in war. Face to face with untold sorrow, world leaders were determined never to let it happen again. Affirming their faith in the dignity and worth of the human person, they set their minds on the advancement of all peoples.

Half a century has passed since the Charter was signed in San Francisco. There has been no world war in that time, but humanity has seen much violence, suffering and injustice. There remain dangers that could threaten civilization and, indeed, the future of humankind. On a more optimistic note, the most notable feature of the past fifty years has been the emancipation and empowerment of people. People today have more power to shape their future than ever before, and that could make all the difference.

At the same time, nation-states find themselves less able to deal with the array of issues—some old, some new - that face them. States and their people, wishing to control their destinies, find they can do so only by working together with others. They must secure their future through commitment to common responsibility and shared effort.

The need to work together also guided the visionary men and women who drew up the Charter of the United Nations. What is new today is that the interdependence of nations is wider and deeper. What is also new is the role of people and the shift of focus from states to people. An aspect of this change is the growth of international civil society.

Fifty years ago, another generation, recoiling from the horror of war and the unleashed potential for human self-destruction, sought to secure a future free from fear and free from want. The result of that effort was the United Nations system, established in the name of the peoples of the world. Today, with the need as great and urgent, and with a heightened sense among people of an endangered future, humanity must renew that effort". (*Our Global Neighbourhood*: xiii, xix)

Thus, fresh challenges have emerged in our rapidly changing society. As this report advocates, these require nations to co-operate in an enlightened and constructive manner across all fields of human endeavour.

The Relevance of 1995: the 50th Anniversary of UNESCO

1995 marks the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of UNESCO. As we look back in time, the adoption of UNESCO's Constitution stands out as a major event that set the seal on a declaration of a very elevated nature carrying an ethical and political message that is totally relevant today. The resolution on the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of UNESCO was adopted by the General Conference to emphasize the importance that should be attached to this event and to underscore the exceptional conjuncture of events that make 1995-1996 a turning point for both UNESCO and for the United Nations system as a whole.

1995 was the United Nations Year for Tolerance, thus giving special depth and impact to the fiftieth anniversary. It was also the year of the adoption of the new 4th Medium Term Strategy, which will take UNESCO into the next century. These circumstances create a positive climate for initiatives aimed at renewal, making it possible to approach the major issues of the future. Hence, a climate of cautious hope has emerged.

Higher Education and the 50th Anniversary

As the Information Note on UNESCO's 50th anniversary states, this event "should be an opportunity to learn the lessons of 50 years of experience while committing the Organization to a future-oriented approach designed to anticipate needs and explore innovative ways and means of meeting them." (Celebration of the 50th anniversary of UNESCO:1)

One such effort has been in the context of higher education. As we approach the end of this century and prepare to enter a new millennium, we are witnessing an unprecedented development in higher education and increased awareness of its vital role for economic and social development. Yet, this sector is in a state of crisis in practically all countries of the world. Although enrolments are rising, the capacity for public support is declining. The gap between the developing and the developed countries with regard to higher learning and research, already enormous, is becoming wider.

The current trends and new challenges facing higher education imply the need to rethink its role and mission, identify new approaches and set new priorities for future development. This has been the leitmotif of the debates on higher education initiated by UNESCO during its 3rd Medium Term Plan (1990-1995) at regional and international level. It is with the same conviction that the youth partners of UNESCO entered into a process to pursue the elaboration of a report synthesizing what they see as the main trends in this domain.

Student Round Tables on Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century

A number of international student federations or associations (AIESEC, ELSA, IAAS, IFMSA, IFSA, IPSF, MIEC, WSCF) decided to mark the fiftieth anniversary of UNESCO by devoting one session of their regional or international congresses in 1995 to this event. A meeting to review the results of these meetings is scheduled in Autumn 1996.

The following report is a synthesis of the findings of these discussions, written within the framework of the concepts of sustainable human development and peace which are the overarching goals of the United Nations system. It aims to raise the issues and challenges facing higher education. It also attempts to suggest specific projects that could be undertaken in co-operation with other stakeholders of the system of higher education to help alleviate current problems and lead us to the institutions which will cater more effectively for the needs of the 21st century.

II. Vision and Reality of Higher Education for Life and for the Workplace

Why should we study? (Vision)

UNESCO's invitation to its student NGOs to reflect on their experience of higher education is an opportunity to consider the fundamental reasons driving the desire to learn and so, to articulate a vision of young people's aspirations for themselves and their future lives. In this quest, the report of UNESCO's Commission on Education for the XXI Century describes the role of the university as "the fountainhead at which the growing numbers of people who find in their own sense of curiosity a way of giving meaning to their lives slake their thirst for knowledge." (*Learning: The Treasure Within*: 134)

It is imperative that these expectations should not be dashed. The young are often called idealistic because they have ambitious dreams for optimal personal fulfilment in order to contribute as effectively as possible to their various societies. This, however, is both natural and necessary if the hope of nations and their citizens for a better world is to be realized. Education has a major role to play in attaining these goals.

Some excellent thoughts on the reasons for study are expressed by E.F. Schumacher who, in his book *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*, suggests that: "When people ask for education, they usually mean something more than mere training, something more than mere knowledge of facts, and something more than a mere diversion. Maybe they cannot themselves formulate precisely what they are looking for; probably they are really seeking ideas that would make the world, and their own lives, intelligible to them. When a thing is unintelligible, one has a sense of estrangement." (Schumacher:75)

This author then describes the loneliness, despair and cynicism which have been engendered by the events of this century and the sense of hopelessness which marks the lives of so many people due to the world's continued inability to resolve its gravest issues.

Faced with this estrangement and bewilderment, a person may well seek education to give purpose to his or her life. But which direction should be taken? Perhaps this person may choose to study a particular discipline - for example, the Sciences or Engineering as these can teach us much about the laws of nature. Perhaps, the Humanities or the Social Sciences will attract as these can provide important ideas which can help us to make sense of our own lives and to understand our societies. But, will this study also help the person to apply their knowledge to life itself? In other words, is knowledge being transmitted to students in the optimal manner so that wisdom, and not just information be acquired?

Schumacher notes that "We know how to do many things, but do we know what to do? Ortega y Gasset (the Spanish philosopher) puts it succinctly: "We cannot live on the human level without ideas. Upon them depends what we do. Living is nothing less that doing one thing rather than another." What, then is education? It is the transmission of ideas which enable man to choose between one thing and another, or, to quote Ortega again, "to live a life which is something above meaningless tragedy or inward disgrace." (Schumacher:77).

How, then, can knowledge be acquired and applied to help create a more socially equitable world? This question has been at the heart of the student debates on higher education.

At AIESEC's 1994 Global Theme Conference, it was concluded that "people should be educated to be better citizens and hence to build their capacity to be visionary, responsible and entrepreneurial. The emerging paradigm of human development and the slow and inevitable decline of the concept of the nation state impose a radical reconsideration of the concept of capacity, in order to concentrate it on the individual and not on a country. For this reason, it is impossible to discuss new ways of improving a country's capacity through development assistance and technical cooperation without an appropriate definition of capacity itself at both the individual and the community levels. After a clear understanding of the capacity which needs to be built, it is then possible to define strategies of international partnership to strengthen our societies.

There is also a pressing need to shift the focus of our development analysis away from countries and to centre it back on the individual person. There must be a shift of direction: the logical flow should proceed from the individual to the community, instead of vice versa. For these reasons, rethinking "capacity building" must commence by defining a new conceptual framework.

The capacity of a human being is determined by the complex interaction of values, skills, abilities and potential which lead to individual self-government and to the consequent ability to proact, reflect and react; thus all these factors are connected in a self-supporting circuit. The capacity of an individual is also partly determined by the environment in which he or she is operating. The pillar of this new conceptual framework is self-governance. Self-governance is defined as a consistent translation into action of recognized values. It means that a person is able to translate values into consistent behaviour. The precondition for self-governance is self-confidence, as an ability to preserve a basic structure in a phase of change."

In such a context, the policy debate on the role of higher education in a changing world has to be based on a judicious balance between the preservation of those features which should remain as part of the educational and cultural heritage and the changes which are essential to preserve the role society accords to higher education. The aim should be to make higher education more responsive to the general problems facing humanity and the needs of economic and cultural life, and more relevant in the context of the specific problems of a given region, country or community.

The relevance of higher education is perhaps best expressed through the variety of academic services it renders to society. In the years to come, the types and methods of delivery of these services will need to be redefined and renegotiated.

Why do we study? (Reality)

Now, more than ever before, young people regard higher education as their passport for a better future, both as citizens and as professionals. However, their journey in this respect is far from simple. On one hand, they wish to explore disciplines which stimulate them - this urge is the natural quest for education and the wisdom it can bring. On the other hand, while higher education enrolments have expanded massively in recent years, the persistence of the global employment crisis has had severe repercussions for young people, and even for those who are graduates. Therefore, many feel that, when choosing their field of study, they must take into account the reality of the labour market.

These complex and paradoxical issues affect quality. This was noted in the WSCF report from the University Consultation in Bangkok (1-8 April, 1995) which served as a basis for the discussions on higher education at this NGO's XXXI General Assembly. The report, entitled *University Concerns*, states that "We are witnessing massive changes in both the content and nature of higher education throughout the world. Various reports and studies point to the diversification of institutions of higher education, as well as to the growing diversity of forms of study (modules, units, credits). In many countries there has been a major shift in the understanding of the university. The traditional model of the university as a community of scholars gathered together in the pursuit of truth and the common good is giving way to the 'service station' or 'cafeteria' or 'revolving door' model of higher education.

The new global economy and the needs and expectations of the growing population of the world have led many influential thinkers and organizations to the view that the traditional model is inappropriate for the rapidly changing situation in the world. A range of new institutions like 'open universities' for distance learning, polytechnics, short-cycle professional and technical institutes, community colleges, and the new information-technology "universities" (that is, learning by satellite and Internet) have been developed to meet the growing demand for higher education and to meet the needs of the global market economy and its changing labour markets.

The huge increase in the number of students entering higher education has precipitated a crisis in universities all over the world because governments in the context of structural adjustment programmes are no longer willing or able to fund the increase in expenditure on higher education. An inevitable consequence of the increase in numbers and the reduction in per capita expenditure is the diminishing of quality in higher education and reduced access by the vulnerable sectors of society, especially women and minorities." (WSCF:62)

The question of increased enrolments is addressed in detail in the UNESCO *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education* which notes that, "Quantitative expansion can be observed in student enrolments in higher education all over the world even if the rates of growth show substantial differences from one region or country to another. This overall trend is due to several factors: demographic growth, significant advances in the provision of primary and secondary education which have meant that more young people are eligible to seek admission to higher education; the economic growth experienced by many countries and regions, and awareness that this development correlates well with investment in higher education. Another major reason is the emergence of independent and democratic countries which have seen in higher education a key instrument not only for their future economic development but also for the social, cultural and political change required to remove the vestiges and inheritance of colonialism and other undemocratic systems, to foster national identity and to develop local human resources and capacities to receive and apply knowledge and technology." (UNESCO Policy Paper:15)

All student organizations seemed to agree that today there is the risk of imbalance between higher education's relations with the world of work and with society as a whole. However, these are in fact complementary and so should be accommodated in an appropriate and equitable manner.

The WSCF report *University Concerns* explicitly warns of the dangers if higher education becomes a purely commercial venture. It states that, "the larger question of the nature and

purpose of higher education has been eclipsed as people increasingly fall prey to the instrumental view of education as training for a job. The spectacular increase in students numbers since 1960 is welcomed. There is therefore a demand for greater access to higher education. However, this precipitates a disturbing phenomenon: the commercialization of education.

The new principle which appears to underpin higher education is commercial viability, which instills individualism, materialism, and competition as the controlling values in society. This principle is part of a pernicious ideology which sees society as consisting of individuals who are naturally competitive and concerned with the accumulation of wealth. Such a society is seen as being served by those subjects or branches of education, especially Science, Technology and Economics, which generate wealth." (WSCF:63)

To avoid such an undesirable outcome, the higher education sub-sector must aim to ensure a satisfactory linkage between education and training. In this regard, UNESCO's Policy Paper explains that, "two parallel trends determine the relationship between higher education and the world of work. Firstly, higher education is moving towards a mass enrolment system as modern economies become increasingly knowledge- intensive and therefore depend more on graduates of higher education, who constitute a "thinking work -force". Secondly, graduates have to accept the need to keep changing jobs, update their knowledge and learn new skills. The world of work is being radically redefined and a large part of the specific knowledge that students acquire during their initial training rapidly becomes obsolete." (UNESCO Policy Paper:24)

"Although higher education institutions are not the only ones in modern society providing professionals training of highly qualified personnel, this nevertheless remains one of their major responsibilities. Universities and other higher education institutions are still considered a particularly appropriate place for the overall training of those leaving secondary education in many academic disciplines and on which further professional training can be based. They also provide an appropriate setting for young people to develop skills essential for effective collaboration between individuals with varied professional and cultural backgrounds. This traditional function has to be seen in the context of the growing need for 'educational services', as society moves towards a model of **lifelong learning for all**, which is gradually replacing the prevailing model of selective and concentrated learning and study for a limited period." (UNESCO Policy Paper:25)

"The process of globalization provides additional evidence that modern development of human resources implies not only a need for expertise in advanced professionalism but also full awareness of the cultural, environmental and social issues involved." (UNESCO Policy Paper:25)

This approach is of the utmost importance as it seeks to strike the correct balance between education and training mentioned above. Also, this may encourage students to enrol in institutions which enhance ethical and moral values in society and which focus on developing an active, participatory civic spirit. A similar idea is echoed by IFMSA in its 1991 40th Anniversary Commemorative Booklet, which says that, "medical education should be oriented towards training the perspective medical personnel to meet the health requirements of the societies they are going to serve. Practical teaching in primary health care must be central to medical curricula. This should include comprehensive care of the individual from

conception to death, with an increasing emphasis on the social and psychological factors of health and disease." (IFMSA:18)

What should we study? (Vision)

Schumacher also provides some thought provoking ideas on the content of education. "First and foremost, the task of education should be the transmission of ideas of value, of what to do with our lives. There is no doubt also of the need to transmit know-how but this must take second place, for it is obviously somewhat foolhardy to put sophisticated skills into the hands of people without making sure that they have a reasonable idea of what to do with them. At present, there can be little doubt that the whole of humankind is in mortal danger, not because we are short of scientific and technological know-how, but because we tend to use it destructively, without wisdom. More education can help us only if it produces more wisdom." (Schumacher: 73)

Thus, education should accord a place to Philosophy. "Whether the subjects taught are those of Science or of the Humanities, if the teaching does not include some elements of Philosophy to help analyse and clarify our fundamental convictions, it cannot educate a person and, consequently, cannot be of real value to society. It is often suggested that education is breaking down because of over-specialization. What could be at fault is not specialization, but the lack of depth with which the subjects are usually presented and the absence of metaphysical awareness.

Education can help us only if it produces "whole people". The truly educated person is not a person who knows a little of everything, not even the person who knows all the details of all subjects (if such a thing were possible): the "whole person", in fact, may have little detailed knowledge of facts and theories, but this person will not be in doubt about his or her basic convictions, nor about his or her view on the meaning and purpose of life. Such persons may not be able to explain these matters in words, but the conduct of their lives will show a certain sureness of touch which stems from an inner clarity." (Schumacher: 84,85)

AIIESEC's book *Education and the 21st Century Citizen: A Youth Action Plan* reiterates this idea when it states that, "the contribution higher education can make in developing societies can take many forms. People need development not only as professionals, but also as members of society. There is a great need for a renewed recognition of human values in higher education which has eroded in modern culture, including harmony, peace, co-operation, community, honesty, justice, equality, compassion and understanding." (AIIESEC:84)

Furthermore, the WSCF has identified the following needs facing students today:

Holistic Education

Students need an education which treats them as whole persons, not just minds for knowing but also hearts for feeling and caring and wills for acting. A holistic approach to education emphasizes effective as well as cognitive learning, qualitative as well as quantitative knowledge, faith as well as reason. It inculcates an understanding of how we are shaped by our history. It also provides a sense of the wholeness of truth, helping students know that ultimately truth is not fragmented but coherent. It recognizes the context from which students come and the society in which they are called to serve.

Appreciation for the Inherent Value of Truth

Instead of viewing truth as a commodity to be bought and sold or acquired simply to get a job, students need to be helped to value education for the way it enhances life, liberates persons from ignorance and parochialism, and enables them to fulfil their human potential and to serve their communities. This precludes any exclusive claims to truth as well as any indifference to it.

A Sense of Purpose and Meaning

Students today often lack a sense of purpose because they have been unable to develop self-esteem or become responsible for their life choices. They need an educational environment in which they feel empowered to shape their lives. This also means recognizing the "morality of knowledge" which means that students will be held responsible for the moral use of what they learn. Moreover, this means helping students develop the kind of personal faith and genuine spirituality which will satisfy their needs for daily living.

Capacity for Critical Thinking and Moral Judgement

At a time when value-neutral objectivity is increasingly considered impossible, students need help in developing the ability to engage in critical analysis and to decide how to act on the basis of their analysis. This requires them to become aware of major social problems, to be informed about policy options and to be able to act in responsible ways. It also involves recognizing the importance of civic involvement and community participation in today's world.

Concern for Justice

Students need to become more aware of injustices wherever these exist - in their educational institutions (admission policies, scholarship awards, grading practices, and governance) and society at large (racial and sexual discrimination, militarism, economic exploitation, persecution and censorship of dissent, abuse of the environment). Students should learn to move beyond analysis to initiate action or join others in efforts to correct injustice and ensure equitable treatment to all persons. Thus, new roles for students are emerging and should be acknowledged and fostered by the institutions of higher learning.

AIIESEC adds the following essentials to this list:

Cross Cultural Competence

Higher education must help young people to understand and respect their own culture and the culture of others, by being competent and responsible when working in a multicultural environment.

Skills to start entrepreneurial projects

Higher education must provide students with opportunities and experience for the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills to prepare them for the challenge presented by the increasing role of small businesses in strengthening local economies in today's global marketplace.

Ability to access, analyze, optimize and utilize information properly

Higher education also needs to equip young people with the conscience and ability to function in an era where information technologies are taking enterprises by storm.

In addition, IFSA suggests the inclusion of *environmental education* since sustainable development aims to utilize resources to satisfy present needs without compromising those

of future generations. Until the last quarter of this century, the world's resources were considered to be unlimited. As this was a misconception, decision-making in environmental matters now needs to focus on the implications of policies for present and future generations.

What do we study? (Reality)

In student circles, many believe that they are not prepared for the real demands facing them after university. Is this a reality? Are our higher education institutions, whether they be in Kenya or Colombia or Europe or Australia, really providing students with outmoded instruction? At the MIEC meeting in Benin, it was observed that, "education and training currently offered are not adequately attuned either to the needs of society or to those of the labour market. The curricula do not reflect realities of the society but still reflect their eurocentric roots. Nor do they provide skills for effective participation in the labour market."

AIIESEC wrote in its book *Education and the 21st Century Citizen* that, "to a large extent, higher education shapes society. Its students are important in creating, developing and changing our world- whether they do it through business, law, politics, community leadership or other fields. The higher education years are among the most formative. It is in these years that opinions mature on issues such as international peace, democratic participation and development. It is also a time of "crystallization" for entrepreneurial thinking, responsibility for society and visionary attitudes. Today's higher education is largely based on its capacity to enable economic productivity and not enough on its capacity to enable responsible leadership in society.

Unfortunately, when looking at what higher education offers today, one can be disappointed. For instance, Business and Economics students concentrate on limited theories of management and financial practice, Law students get stuck in the intricacies of judicial processes, and Science and Engineering students consider only what can be proven quantitatively. Few educational institutions offer a wholly integrated course, incorporating both specialization in certain fields, and a broad overview of international affairs and responsibilities. Students are not given an awareness of the links between their education and how to take a proactive role in the development of their society. The result is the overemphasis of individual goals and a disconnection of concern for progress in society."

Many of the student debates pointed out that similar problems exist in other disciplines. For example, the Sciences are being taught without sufficient awareness of the presuppositions of this field, nor of the meaning and significance of scientific laws, nor of the place occupied by the Natural Sciences in relation to human thought as a whole. The result is that the presuppositions of science are normally mistaken for its findings. The teaching of Economics does not foster adequate awareness of the impact of present-day economic theory on the process of social and human development. With regard to the medical profession, the IFMSA 40th Anniversary Commemorative Booklet expresses the view that "Medicine is taught without a proper introduction to the philosophy behind the present health care system and medical science." (IFMSA:2) Moreover, the IFMSA Policy Platform on Medical Education says "there is unanimous agreement among medical education experts that the fact-learning aspects are grossly overemphasized. Medical students are submerged by details and the memorization of facts to such an extent that individual academic activity on the part of the student to integrate its knowledge and assimilate it in terms of clinical and biological relevance is precluded. Medical students are expected to develop scientific thought processes

and critical evaluation skills, but these skills are rarely taught at medical schools and, in the rare case in which such skills are taught, it is most often as an afterthought. Moreover, the sheer amount of knowledge to be assimilated is so large that a great majority of students have to set critical thinking aside in order to have time enough to assimilate facts."

In a wider context, the MIEC meeting in Benin felt that "African reality is not well reflected in post-secondary education at the moment. Cultural and social contexts could be better reflected in education in order to provide real analytical capacity to tackle problems in African societies today. Isolation of universities from other areas of the society should be discouraged." Thus, it was recommended that "the curriculum should be geared to better reflect the realities of African societies. The philosophy behind the educational systems could be carefully studied and changes suggested to support development and restructuring of the education system, teaching and learning methods and curricula. This development process should not only focus on higher education but should take into consideration all other levels of education as well (even informal education at home) since the basis for educational achievement and learning skills are formed there."

In contrast, a more positive note was sounded by IFSA which described the interesting innovation in the Forestry curriculum at Wageningen Agricultural University in the Netherlands as follows:

"In 1958, the curriculum included courses in Silvicultural Techniques, Wood Science, Forest Exploitation, Geology, Soil Science and Entomology, while social aspects of Forestry were virtually absent. Today, a large part of the curriculum consists of "social subjects" including Forest Policy, Forestry and Rural Development, Forests for Recreation, Forestry and Land Use and many others. Changes in the content of the Forestry B.Sc. and M. Sc. programmes are being put into place over a period of months rather than years. Integration with other curricula - such as Nature Conservation and the Land-use Sciences - is a logical option which is being followed by many universities throughout the world. From this point of view, the end of traditional Forestry studies seems near."

Thus, change is clearly possible and relates to the question of diversification in higher education to meet social needs - a complex area which is in a state of considerable flux. According to UNESCO, "certain institutions have a disciplinary specialization such as agriculture, medicine, teacher training, social sciences or physical education, but the current trend is towards a more comprehensive disciplinary context. Closely linked to this trend is diversification of levels of study. The programmes usually classified as undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate and which lead to one of the three main types of degree - bachelor, master and doctor (or their national and professional equivalents), are the main forms of certification in higher education. However, many functions associated with higher studies and training are now taking place in environments other than traditional higher educational institutions. These programmes often respond to the specific learning needs of a highly diverse clientele - for example by providing distance learning courses- and answer the demands of further professionalization and the constantly changing labour market. Their certification raises problems of both an academic and professional nature, including the need to grant academic recognition to skills acquired outside academic institutions." (UNESCO Policy Paper:17)

Such experimentation, therefore, will necessarily result in a period of trial and error. However, the ultimate aim to achieve a better match between higher education studies and the needs of society remains valid.

How should we study? (Vision)

During their discussions, students were invited to comment on the methodology currently employed in the teaching and learning processes within their institutions and on the impact of this.

AIESEC says that learning seems to have been replaced with lecturing in modern society. Increasingly, there is a call for the implementation of traditional education which emphasized leading students through a process whereby they learned through experience and reflection. This naturally increased commitment and involvement and led to educational empowerment as opposed to unsustainable knowledge. The teacher, too, was led through a learning process and grew wiser by going through the learning process with the students. Several educational styles and methods are proposed here as important for higher education in the 21st century.

Integration is crucial for holistic education

The traditional barriers between disciplines encourage students to only specialize and not understand the links between their chosen field and others. Humanistic considerations should become a standard element of all disciplines. If an integrated approach were present in Economics and Business Education, economies would have a better chance at more sustainable growth. An integrated approach in Engineering would enable products and processes to be more environmentally sound. Every field of study can make these sort of comparisons with an impact on society.

Education must be an interactive process

This encourages students to develop intellectual curiosity and to analyze situations from many angles. This can be achieved through working and learning in teams, where finding the best solutions is a process of group contributions and not of the mono-dimensional thinking of one person.

Appraisal systems should redefine the meaning of "achievement"

Appraisal systems encourage students to evaluate what they are learning from each experience and develop a record of achievement, acknowledging all their activities and skills. An appraisal system that concentrates solely on exam results will not prepare a person to play an active role in society. In industrialized societies, the importance placed on these results have pushed young people towards excessive study at the expense of other important life skills.

Learning to learn should be the ultimate goal

This is particularly important since, today, new emphasis is placed on lifelong learning which provides people with enormous new opportunities, responsibilities and challenges to adapt. It is well known that knowledge becomes outdated very fast and so rigid educational methods which make learning a fixed product must be rendered more adaptable. Education and training should promote the capacity to reason, to use intuition and to understand changing realities through holistic thinking. Learning in the workplace, learning by doing and learning by exchanging ideas and students could be some of the various means adopted.

Learning centres

Every city or locality should have a learning centre, which is the focus of cutting-edge knowledge and ideas. Both the local population and full time students should have access to these learning centres, which are based on building individual capacity. Essentially, capacity building is the development of a unique mixture of skills and knowledge, which enables each person to play a proactive role in society in relation to the challenges to be encountered throughout life.

Naturally, this should be done in the context of the local environment. All too often foreign or outmoded education methods are adopted without careful consideration, and the subjects offered become irrelevant to the needs of the community. Locally applicable knowledge, offered in a way which reflects the learning style of those being taught must become central to course content.

Learning for life will mean that a holistic approach is applied to what students are taught. Students must play a participative role in constructing their own learning, which must contain both social and professional skills. These should form a foundation for life but can be regularly updated by learning centres.

In this vein, the MIEC meeting in Benin noted that, "higher education studies could be restructured towards more practical programmes and graduates should no longer expect easy or immediate employment after graduation and therefore they should attain skills which enable them to create employment opportunities for themselves. Policy measures in other areas but in support of private sector activities could be taken to enhance job creation."

Fora of debate and discussion

Higher education institutions should be fora for debate and discussion to reflect the challenges and needs of society. This should be done through co-operation between the state, local government, academia, students, NGOs and business. Discussion should focus on the major issues of the day, with the aim of finding innovative and acceptable solutions for the community. It is important that every group is actively involved to encourage participation and commitment to community goals. Discussion and debate is part of the ongoing learning that every community needs to develop.

An impressive example of this function was provided by Dr Robert Segall from the South African Association for Academic Development. Commenting on the necessity for discussion at the community level, he noted that no blueprint for the future education system existed. Rather, informed input was required and this inspired students at Witwatersrand University to bring together a wide range of organizations and people to review the tertiary education system in South Africa. Consequently, politicians, business leaders and the academic community joined students in examining the development of higher education during the country's transitional period.

Centres for community change

Higher education is a service to the community and every institution should be interwoven into local life. It is of great importance to encourage students to take on an active role in society through community projects, politics and other mechanisms related to social infrastructure. In many cases students can share their learning by offering courses to the local population. In some higher education institutions (for example, Lujan University, Argentina

and Bir Zeit University, Palestine), community involvement has become a required part of the student course.

Student Mobility

An important development in recent years has been the increasing cross-border relationships among colleges and universities. In many cases these affect the education of students and this influence should become stronger. Of all people, students are most likely to adapt positively to international networks and global perspectives. Their education should enable them to think holistically about the world around them and their specific contribution to it. Student exchanges, courses in International Relations dealing with global issues and international networking skills should form a cornerstone in many courses.

Internationalization

In general, international exchanges could reveal new ways of approaching societal problems and contribute to the problem-solving processes. Exchanges should be seen as a two-way process in which all partners should be in position to actively "export" their innovations and experiences. Comparison of different contexts, national structures, programmes and results could be profitable for development of educational systems and research.

MIEC's meeting in Benin drew the conclusion that, "appreciation of one's own national, cultural and social background should not be seen as contrary to openness to new ideas relevant to the "global village". Thus, exchange programmes should also be encouraged in the African and south-south contexts.

Some interesting international initiatives have been developed by AIESEC Australia for the Asia Pacific region. Projects such as **Crossing Cultures on Campus**, the **Global Graduate** and the **Asia Pacific Graduate Development Programme** create opportunities for cultural exchanges as well as for practical exposure to international studies and to the international business environment.

Closer links between higher education teaching and research

This is needed to diminish the gap between these two activities which often function too independently of each other in higher education institutions. More research is needed on societal needs, future trends and challenges to promote co-operation between various disciplines. Real partnership between teaching and research can open many doors for more relevant education linked to the needs of students and of society.

The importance of this linkage extends to the field of Education itself. This was noted in the report of the sixth session of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century which stated that "the development of research capability all over the world is important in order to incorporate the longer-range effects of education. When evaluation of projects is carried in the short term, or immediately after the project has been completed, results can be quite different from a review that stretches out over a longer period."

Interdisciplinary and problem-based learning

These require interface between students and the community at large and a more flexible role for the teacher.

In an essay entitled *Educating Foresters for the 21st Century*, it is recommended that, "social aspects should be made an important part of contemporary Forestry education,

alongside more 'traditional' but still essential courses. Foresters should be taught how to deal with various groups and representatives of society (e.g. local populations, politicians, professionals from other disciplines). More attention should be given to subjects such as Sociology, Environmental Psychology, Public Relations, Law and policy making. Also, the foresters' entry into society should be embodied by Forestry curricula that focus on urban as well as rural areas. In the United States and Canada, Urban Forestry has been accepted by the Forestry sector as a new and promising field of interest. Forestry does not stop at city boundaries." (IFSA:78)

Similarly, IFMSA envisions medical education as "problem-based and integrated with early and continuous patient contact. This implies a new role for the medical teacher, who in the envisaged system would function more as a tutor and/or counsellor than as a teacher in the traditional role. In order to be effective, this system must be based on rational curriculum planning with evaluation systems devised to maintain its flexibility. Students should work in small groups in a real life or simulated real life settings, facilitating self-learning, self-assessment and teaching skills development."(IFMSA:62)

Learning with technology

The benefits of this are clear. Yet, the technologies in use today do not adequately reflect much of the direct communication between people. Emotions, expressions, body language and other non-written verbal communication are not yet possible through commonly used technology which can be seen cold and intimidating. Furthermore, there are obvious worries about the psychological implications for youth who may lose the warmth of human interaction in their learning environment.

There are also questions on the cultural bias of technology. According to Professor Frederic Litto, Scientific Co-ordinator of the School of the Future at the University in Sao Paolo, Brazil, humans are amazingly quick at adopting to the medium with which they are working. On Internet, people become more "textual" or adept with language and so have a different approach to thought which shows itself in the ability to take short cuts in the thinking process. Such a situation could led to communication which is neutral and does not reflect the benefits of learning in a specific cultural environment.

How do we study? (Reality)

Throughout the debates, serious concerns were expressed about the conditions in which students now pursue their degrees. In particular, it was considered that the scale of massification can impact negatively on the quality of the teaching and learning processes. In addition, the rising cost of tuition was viewed with increasing apprehension.

The WSCF claims that, "Morale in universities has plunged, both among students and teachers, as they experience overcrowding, deteriorating physical facilities, lack of resources and materials, increased class sizes and workload. As government has sought to shift the burden of expenditure to students, many students have been forced by this exercise in 'cost-sharing' into self-financing part time study or into loans which leave them with mountainous debts at the end of their studies. Further, the increasing privatization of education will mean the 'dualisation' of education, insofar as a two-tier system will emerge in which private institutions will attract funding and will be able to offer a higher standard of education to

those who can afford it while only struggling and low funded public institutions have access to greater resources and provide better education than many private schools." (WSCF:63)

According to UNESCO's *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education*, "profound changes in the institutional structures and forms of higher education as well as methods of teaching, training and learning have been or are being undertaken by national authorities and by the institutions themselves. One of the direct results has been the **diversification** of higher education in practically all world regions. Although universities in particular, which cherish their long established traditions, are somewhat resistant to change, higher education as a whole has undergone a far-reaching transformation in a relatively short period of time." (UNESCO Policy Paper:16)

The Policy Paper explains that the reasons for these changes are both external and internal. "Among the **external factors**, the following have been particularly relevant for the diversification:

- increased social demand for higher education and the need to cater for a much more diversified clientele;
- drastic cuts in spending on public higher education, thus compelling institutions to design alternative, more cost effective programmes and delivery systems;
- constantly changing labour market needs which have required higher education institutions to make provision for training in new professional, technological and managerial fields and in new contexts, as a result of the globalization and regionalization of economies.

The following three **internal factors** have been pertinent, particularly for the reorganization of teaching and research activities in higher education:

- enormous advances in science, resulting in the development of academic disciplines and their further diversification;
- growing awareness of the need to promote interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches and methods in teaching, training and research;
- rapid development of new information and communication technologies and their growing applicability to various functions and needs in higher education." (UNESCO Policy Paper:17)

The cumulative outcome of the processes outlined above is a pronounced **diversity** within the national systems of higher education, mainly concerning institutional structures, programmes, student population and funding sources. The internal complexity of national systems is such that hardly any taxonomy, however flexible, can make a clear-cut distinction between various types of institution and programme. There is, nevertheless, a certain degree of similarity in the way the individual institutions see their place in the higher education system. The identification and analysis of some particularly distinctive traits are a relevant indicator of past changes and can also signal the likely direction of development.

During recent years, the following dichotomous, but not necessarily bipolar, differentiations within many higher education systems have been observed:

University and non-university types of educational institution

Noticeable variations exist among universities themselves concerning the amount and quality of research, the number of academic disciplines and study programmes. As well, these vary markedly from non-university higher education institutions, due primarily to the research function.

Size

Large institutions are frequently located in urban centres where they themselves may be major employers. When higher education institutions function in several localities, they are often multicampus organizations accommodating various affiliated colleges and institutions as well as postgraduate or professional schools. Some function as federated or comprehensive institutions. Size and quality are obviously linked.

The student body

For economic and social reasons, the number of part-time, non-degree-course students is increasing. Furthermore, even full-time students are tending to begin studies after some work experience or to alternate periods of work with periods of study. Consequently, the traditional age structure of the student body is becoming more diversified.

Funding sources and proprietary status

The proportion of students in private institutions is on the increase, reaching over 50 per cent of total enrolments in some countries, mostly developing ones. The recent emergence of private higher education institutions and professional schools, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, meant that new laws had to make provision for this trend. It is generally agreed that, at least from the point of view of academic standing, the differences between private higher education institutions are greater than those within the public sector. It should also be pointed out that there can be substantial differences even within a given national system concerning the legal status and academic accountability of different private higher education institutions.

In addition to these areas, other types of differentiation can be discerned in higher education. For instance, in certain national systems, a distinction can be observed between institutions which, by their character and location, have a national mission and those which cater for the needs of a particular region or even locality. On the other hand, certain institutions, particularly professional schools, are international in character. There are also regional institutions serving the needs of several small states, particularly island nations, which lack the economies of scale that would enable them to establish fully fledged institutions of their own. Other institutional distinctions can be made between secular and religious institutions and- although this is increasingly uncommon - between gender-specific institutions.

It would be erroneous to label any of these institutions or their programmes as optimal responses or models. It might be tempting, for instance, to postulate that if wider access to and provision of higher education at a lower cost to the state were the desired goals, then differentiated institutions, preferably distance education-based and predominantly private, would be the solution. However, one should not lose sight of the fact that a decision taken about one component, function, mission or structure in a higher education system does not leave the others unaffected. In general, diversification is a positive trend in higher education today which should be supported by all means available. But underlying all decisions geared towards promoting diversification must be the concern to ensure the **quality** of institutions

and programmes, **equity** with regard to access and the preservation of higher education's **mission and function** and full respect for **academic freedom** and **institutional autonomy**.

Last but not least, the impact of Internationalization deserves special mention as the growth of this phenomenon has produced both positive and negative results.

In recent years, many universities and other institutions have taken a proactive role in developing relationships with other bodies abroad. In Europe this has been part of a specific effort by the European Union, under schemes such as ERASMUS, where students can take part of their studies in another European Union country. Other bilateral efforts have provided students with greatly enhanced opportunities to receive an international education.

On one hand, the benefits of Internationalization are well expressed in UNESCO's *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education* which states that "Recent developments in education and science have reinforced the validity of the argument that since knowledge is universal, its pursuit, advancement and dissemination can be greatly enhanced by the collective efforts of the international academic community. This is the reason for the ingrained international dimension of academic life in general, encompassing higher education institutions, scientific societies and student associations. The particular attention paid to the internationalization of the content and context of higher education functions and the growth of student and staff mobility gain additional significance in the light of current trends in global trade, economic and political integration and the growing need for intercultural understanding. The expanding number of students, teachers and researchers who study, work, live and communicate in an international context, a phenomenon facilitated by new telecommunications technologies, affirms this overall positive development." (UNESCO Policy Paper:19)

However, serious problems have arisen. In the last decade, student mobility has risen by almost 30 per cent with most of the young people involved coming from the developing world. This represents a potential danger to the goal of endogenous development if these newly trained graduates decide to remain abroad after finishing their studies. Or, if they do return home, they are often attracted away from the higher education sector itself where career prospects are limited. As a result of this internal brain drain, the quality of the academy is diminished. In addition, there is the question of equity since higher education has become a major source of revenue for a number of industrialized countries where overseas students are charged full fees for their courses. This clearly restricts study abroad to higher-income groups. Moreover, mobility tends to be too north-north orientated as over 90 per cent of students from the industrialized world go to another developed country.

Overall, student and academic mobility have contributed to the long-term external brain drain but they are not the sole cause of this problem. It is, to quote UNESCO, "part of a much wider phenomenon of regional and international migration resulting from interrelated economic, social and political factors. It is also indicative of the strained state of economic, social and political affairs in many parts of the world. Study abroad can be considered as one of the contributory factors to the migration of highly qualified human capital and talent. However, a large number of those involved in the brain drain phenomenon have in fact been initially educated in their own countries. The lack of local incentives and opportunities for the professional advancement of young researchers and graduates can become a prevalent factor conducive to external and internal brain drain- both being detrimental to the functioning and long-term development of higher education." (UNESCO Policy Paper:19,20)

This illustrates the complexity of this phenomenon and the need for future vigilance to ensure that internationalization pays due attention to central issue of equity.

In conclusion, this first section has examined some of the factors influencing the way in which young people are pursuing their tertiary studies in the world of the 1990s. There is a clear discrepancy between aspiration and reality, between hope for the quality and relevance of higher education and the severe social and financial constraints faced by students today. It is now vital to ensure that this discrepancy does not become more pronounced - if so, the traditional mission of higher education and of its social contribution and benefits are at serious risk.

III. Special Urgencies of Higher Education

Today, higher education faces very specific crises which require urgent attention. A number of these are considered in the present section. Thus, we might commence this reflection with a statement from WSCF's *University Concerns* report which says that, "inadequate salaries, the absence of women and minority teachers, and disproportionate power exerted by some of those in authority hinder the fulfillment of the teaching vocation and further fracture the academic community."(WSCF:64) To these important issues should be added the urgency to build new and effective partnerships between stakeholders in the higher education community so as to address key issues in a spirit of co-operation.

The Professoriate

Basic Issues

The concern for the status and future of the teaching profession, as evoked by the WSCF debate, is indeed timely. Today it is sad but true to say that this profession is in disarray on a global scale. The current malaise touches all levels of the profession and here, higher education is particularly involved since this sub-sector frequently deals with teacher training for primary and secondary schooling.

Perhaps it should be clarified, at the outset, what is meant by the term "professoriate" as this would suggest highly qualified scholars who have traditionally held the prime responsibility for educating the intelligentsia of a given society. Hence a certain elitism is usually associated with the term itself.

For the purposes of this report, a broader denotation of the term is used so as to cover all those involved in teaching, training and research at the tertiary level. We have noted that, in many countries, higher education enrolments are soaring rapidly towards massification of the sub-sector and that this is causing grave problems in terms of the quality of the instruction received. At the same time, there is a trend towards diversification which seeks - with a certain logic and justification - to give new validity to forms of post-secondary teaching and training other than the purely academic. In this area, research can receive less emphasis as the prime focus is on providing skill-based knowledge for the labour market.

So, our remarks on the professoriate apply to all those engaged in the vital tasks of creating and transferring knowledge and know-how in a changing world. For these reasons, a discussion of the professoriate must take account of three key factors: the **status** of the higher education teaching profession; the **innovations in content and delivery** which must be mastered by these teachers in order to deal effectively with the nature and impact of knowledge in today's world; and the **new and enlarged definition of professional duties for higher education teaching personnel** who must be adequately equipped for an ever growing range of responsibilities - both academic and social. This last factor clearly indicates that their education and training must enable them to function as key actors in the current process of profound societal transformation.

Throughout the student debates, it was manifestly clear that the calibre of the professoriate is probably the major factor for higher education to be deemed both excellent and pertinent to the needs of society. Yet, at the same time, there was obvious disquiet that this is not the case in a considerable number of contexts. Indeed, the WSCF discussion noted that "teachers in universities, as a result of institutional pressure to publish or perish, are more and more removed from students and discouraged from developing a person-centred style of education." (WSCF:65)

Consequently, an urgency for higher education is to examine the quality of the training process for the professoriate in order to assess the gravity of the problems cited and to propose useful solutions. In the past, an advanced academic degree was the main criterion to be employed in universities and in other institutions of higher learning. The process of change suggests that this - while remaining a vital component - is no longer sufficient per se. Today, the professor is required to help students understand and interpret their environment to a degree hitherto unknown. Hence, the purely academic must be complemented by broad and socially applicable knowledge, which results from a rich and diverse experience of the world itself. In this vein, the MIEC meeting in Benin recognized the value of both formal and informal collaboration between students and academic staff and considered that appropriate opportunities such as social and cultural activities should be encouraged. Through such contacts, students may feel better equipped to use their knowledge to help construct a more positive social and economic order.

The Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel

Today, given the vast changes underway, the status of higher education personnel remains ill defined and thus unsatisfactory in too many countries. It might be said that professional status derives from community respect on the one hand, and from correct financial remuneration on the other hand. This balance is too often lacking with an attendant **negative** result for the quality and relevance of the higher education sub-sector. Indeed, during the student discussions, a number of references were made to institutional environments which were not sufficiently supportive of teachers, nor of their true educational mission.

For this reason, UNESCO has pursued its enquiry into the status of higher education personnel. This is intended to continue its long-established monitoring of the conditions governing the teaching profession itself which is the objective of the Joint UNESCO/ILO Experts' Committee whose mandate is to maintain a watching brief on all main aspects related to this domain such as trends affecting pre-service and in-service training, the

growing socio-cultural dimension of the profession, its collective bargaining powers and the equality of opportunity within its ranks.

Till now, it was not considered necessary to extend this analysis to the tertiary level. However, with the rapid changes underway, the status of the profession including its stability and conditions of service have been severely affected. For this reason, UNESCO at its 27th General Conference (Paris 1993) requested the Director-General to prepare a preliminary report on the issue, and, after wide consultations with Member States, a first draft of a Recommendation.

Much debate and negotiation will be undertaken before any decision on this document is made. However, even its present draft form covers the main issues to be addressed. These include the contribution of higher education teaching personnel to educational objectives and policies as well as to institutional development through the assurance of their professional duties and responsibilities. As well, the draft Recommendation studies principles governing preparation for the teaching profession, the rights and freedoms of academics and, very importantly, the terms and conditions of their employment such as entry criteria, job security, appraisal, discipline, remuneration levels, negotiation mechanisms and recognition of the needs of specific groups. It is, thus, a rich document which presents Member States of UNESCO with a comprehensive analysis of the key issues related to the status of this profession in today's society.

The draft Recommendation departs from a number of basic premises all of which affirm that:

"Teaching in higher education, acquired and maintained through rigorous and lifelong study and research, is a profession: it is a form of public service that requires of higher education personnel expert knowledge and specialized skills; it also calls for a sense of personal and institutional responsibility for the education and welfare of students and for a commitment to high professional standards in scholarship and research." (Draft Recommendation:9).

If these challenges are adequately met, then the status of higher education teachers will be significantly enhanced and their contribution to scholarship and its applications may be more justly recognized on a global scale. Students, both today and of the future, will be the principal beneficiaries of such progress.

Innovation in the Content and Delivery of Higher Education

To ensure the quality and relevance of tertiary studies, considerable change has to take place in the content and delivery of the teaching, training and research carried out in institutions of higher education. As well, new approaches to the learning process are required as student profiles and their conditions of study continue to change at a rapid rate.

A number of the student NGO debates accorded top priority to these challenges. For example, there was strong support for the proposal that the selection and promotion of academic staff should be based on proven teaching ability, as well as on the quality of research. Indeed, IFMSA considered that, given the massification of higher education, good teaching might well be viewed as the more important function. Moreover, it was felt that student feedback could be a relevant component in the assessment of this skill. (IFMSA:48)

Clearly, the introduction of innovative methods and the capacity to assess their impact vary across the regions of the world. As this was a common theme arising from the range of student discussions, it thus merits the extrapolation of certain overriding objectives and trends.

In recent years, the drive towards reform and renewal in higher education has obliged institutions to provide for the initial and ongoing training of academic staff so that they may meet the challenges of a changing profession. Hence, the emergence of staff development as a concept and practice which is gaining ground in institutions everywhere. While this might have met with some scepticism and resistance in the past, staff development is now an accepted part of institutional policy and figures prominently in the mission statements of universities and similar establishments. The UNESCO publication *Higher Education Staff Development: Directions for the 21st Century* sought to identify regional trends and experiences in this area and, in particular, to emphasize the ambit of the concept itself. Staff development covers curricular, pedagogical and managerial innovation, thereby recognizing that it is increasingly likely that academics, during their careers, will be called upon to undertake a variety of important tasks related to the development of the institutions where they are employed. Naturally, the excellence of their qualifications remains the first and most vital pre-requisite for their professional lives. However, there is now much greater stress on the quality of the teaching and learning process so as to satisfy the expectations of students and to prepare them better for their future roles as citizens and professionals in society.

The case studies related to curricular innovation cover the response of universities to the resolution of important social issues such as adult literacy in African countries, R and D activity in Latin America and environmental management in Asia. In addition, one case study describes an experience designed to foster a deeper understanding of specific socio-cultural contexts through inclusion of certain Humanities-based subjects in the structure of professional courses.

The chapters devoted to pedagogical innovation focus on the urgencies facing for staff and students alike, notably the need to gain competence in the use of Communication and Information Technology since this is a basic tool for the generation and acquisition of knowledge in today's world - and, regrettably, a major factor exacerbating the increasing inequality between the rich and poor countries with respect to the development process. As well, attention is paid to the importance of problem-based learning which enhances students' critical capacities, thus enabling them to deal with a variety of very different social and professional situations. Given the increased mobility phenomenon, this is a vital part of the training provided during a tertiary education.

Last but not least, pedagogical innovation in staff development should include sensitization to the socio-cultural backgrounds of students. One hand, this has an essential bearing on understanding approaches to knowledge; on the other hand, it underscores the growing cultural diversity of student profiles in institutions everywhere and the need for academic staff to be trained to deal with the associated consequences.

Management Skills for Higher Education Teaching Personnel

Today, for many professors, management skills will be essential so as to lead institutions or faculties in a manner which responds effectively to the changes taking place in the higher

education sub-sector worldwide at the behest of governments. This also holds true for the individual management of one's teaching programme and material and is the result of government demand for greater accountability from institutions and their personnel and is a logical consequence of market-driven economies which are becoming more numerous worldwide. The UNESCO publication describes instances of managerial change in various regions - Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America - thus showing the widespread nature of these transformations and their impact on the higher education sub-sector.

It should not be forgotten that the purpose of good management is social as well as economic. The ultimate aim is to improve the quality of education for students, whatever their social background. Poverty, economic hardship and social exclusion are rife in many contexts, even in the industrialized world, and all levels of the teaching profession are called upon to offer guidance and support to young people seeking solid social and moral values in their different societies. Thus, good management is not simply to satisfy governments but rather to ensure that the education and training offered to students are of the highest calibre.

In conclusion, the holistic approach to staff development links this area to the major forces driving the change process in higher education. These have already been mentioned in this report and include the increased demand for access, the diversification of systems and institutions, the assurance of excellence and pertinence, closer linkages to the world of work, the growth of Internationalization due to the mobility of people and knowledge and the overall reform of the sub-sector which includes the call for greater institutional accountability and the reduction of public funding.

The challenges are clear - academic excellence remains an undisputed requirement for higher education of quality. However, the need for social relevance and application of knowledge to the numerous development issues in each and every country is fundamentally a question of attitude - bestowed by experience and a desire to comprehend the world and its diversity. To attain this goal, students and their professors must work together.

Marginalized Peoples and Higher Education

Basic Issues

Education for marginalized groups has become a growing priority around the world and extends to the tertiary level of teaching and learning. The "mass production" model of higher education cannot take into account the different learning needs existing among such groups because it does not address cultural diversity issues in its content. Higher education for and about marginalized groups should be based on an understanding of their experiences, traditions and learning processes.

Migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples and the poor need full access to the educational system of the cultural majority. Thus, they cannot be neglected in the planning and development of education. At the same time, their cultural heritages should be given appropriate recognition and their needs for specialized education seen as crucial for them to become productive, integrated members of society.

In this respect, higher education should not be regarded only in terms of instruction since the opportunities for sharing cultural diversity are also extremely beneficial. A more informal

approach arising from integration amongst all groups in a given community is perhaps an important point of departure in addressing the whole issue of higher education and marginalized peoples.

Movements of Peoples

As movements of peoples become more common, the homogeneity of societies will continue to decrease in almost every part of the world. Countries in all regions have opened their doors to refugees and migrants. In those societies, non-native groups now constitute considerable segments of the population. Considering refugee movements alone, today there are over 20 million such persons world-wide, causing governments and international organizations to address the educational needs of changing populations.

One of the many priorities is to sensitize both the native and refugee or migrant populations to the change process. Whatever the teaching methodology, community leaders must be involved in designing the curriculum and in fostering a better dialogue among all groups.

The cohabitation of people from vastly different backgrounds is now a fact of life. As certain groups can often become marginalized from the educational processes of a majority culture, efforts need to be strengthened to create and sustain a society where all enjoy the same rights and opportunities.

In many instances, cohabitation has proved to be a painful exercise. Marginalized groups often live in squalid conditions and suffer indignities as a result. Xenophobia is still rife in many countries and has suppressed cultural expression, access to legal services and information. Formal and informal education must be available to all minority groups and should accommodate their different cultural and learning needs. At the same time, it must be ensured that minority groups receive a solid educational foundation for integrating into the new environment. Higher education has a role to play in this process through its specific responsibilities towards those who qualify for tertiary studies. Their entry and rapid adjustment into the new system should be facilitated so that they can enjoy the same opportunities as the majority.

Skills for Migrants

Migrants have the potential to make great contributions to the new societies in which they are settling. Many migrants will assimilate themselves because it is their choice to do so, but ethnic ties will always remain. This must be facilitated throughout the education of both children and adults. Culture, language and tradition should be compared and contrasted to the majority culture, enabling all to appreciate similarities and differences and to choose an individual approach to integration. There is no one right way, and education can only offer each person access to the knowledge and skills which provide fair participation in both the ethnic community and in national life.

One of the greatest problems facing migrants in host countries is the lack of productive employment. In too many cases, unemployment rates are higher amongst migrant populations than that of the general population. This situation presents a specific challenge for education as exclusion can prevent harmonious integration. For this, adequate government investment

is essential and initiatives undertaken should utilize expertise in the higher education sub-sector to promote the acquisition of vital skills, thus helping to resolve the problem.

Integrating Refugees

Unlike migrants, refugees do not necessarily want to be where they are. They often yearn for their homes, but are kept away because of war, famine or other catastrophes. No one can be sure if they will stay in any one place for a significant time, but once settled they will want to create a fulfilling life for themselves. Some of their problems are similar to those of migrants, such as the need to learn about the way the host society works and their rights within it. Others are different, such as the desire to hold onto their memories of home and to retain their cultural identity.

Refugees will often go back home where their economies and societal fabric are likely to be altered. It is thus logical to offer life skills to refugees who in turn can begin rebuilding their home countries. Culturally sensitive teaching of democracy, participation and nation-building should be a central components in the education system for refugees. Trade and enterprise skills related to the potential competitive advantages of the home country can also be offered. Here, the lifelong learning opportunities available through higher education can have great potential.

Such issues have also been of direct concern to student organizations wishing to contribute via their professional expertise to the solution of the refugee question. For example, the IFMSA's Standing Committee on Refugees, known as SCOR, aims to raise the awareness of all health organizations, medical associations and communities regarding the problems of refugees. Attention is focused on urgent needs for water, food and shelter as well as on social integration and the training of health personnel to deal with the immediate care required. An example of this initiative is the Kuwaiti Medical Students' Association project in Sudan.

Indigenous Peoples and Self-determination

Worldwide, there are over 300 million indigenous people, whose cultures and lifestyles are attuned to the land on which they live. As land becomes more scarce, the biggest worry is that indigenous populations will be marginalized into islands of poverty, unable to adjust to society and unable to pursue their own traditions and lifestyles.

History has not provided a good example in dealing with indigenous populations who were often forced to accept a different religion, a change in language and elimination of much of their culture. Unfortunately, this approach to indigenous groups still continues in many countries.

Indigenous groups have rights. Hence, their own distinct cultural identity, including language, rituals, religions, and ownership of traditional lands must be respected. A draft universal declaration on the rights of indigenous people states that "indigenous groups must be able to participate on an equal footing with all other citizens and without the adverse discrimination in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State." This does not

suggest that indigenous groups should be cut off from society but rather that they should proactively represent themselves in relevant fora.

Conflict arises when western culture (and its associated technologies and innovations) is considered superior to others and when it is insisted that improving the quality of life means submission to this. Concepts such as political representation, equal opportunity, basic human rights and capacity building are prime concerns. However, only if both sides can agree that their cultures have equal rights can they begin a productive dialogue and enter into mutually beneficial social contracts.

In some cases, such as in Australia, indigenous groups are equipped with the language skills of the dominant culture, and are therefore in a position to represent their needs independently. In other cases, such as in the Amazon region, indigenous groups are totally remote from the dominant culture. Formal education here is non-existent and research has shown that the differing learning styles may restrict any sort of integrated education system.

Higher education should not impose a homogenized set of values, other than those of basic human rights. Instilling pride in cultural identity contributes to a multicultural society, which allows indigenous groups to determine their own futures. This may mean that indigenous groups do not participate in the formal education system, but rather import some of the basic ideas such as self-determination into their own teaching methods. This must be supported by an enlightened approach to issues such as land rights, law, political representation, and other relationships between the two societies.

All these instances are areas where Law students can be particularly effective. **Already**, ELSA has put in place a strong Human Rights action within the Academic Programme of each of its 34 national associations in Europe. This initiative could well be replicated by bodies of Law students in other regions.

Poverty

Global development has entered an era of stagnation. Development, as a concept, has been primarily based on and measured by economic factors. Paradoxically, poverty has increased both in industrialized and developing countries. Global distribution of income has become increasingly unbalanced between and within nations. Dramatic increases in income disparity have resulted in more people than ever before living below the poverty line.

According to the 1992 UNDP Human Development Report, since 1960 the income of the richest 20% of the population is 150 times greater than that of the poorest 20% of society. Global poverty and marginalization result in segments of all countries' populations being shut out of the social process. This includes education and so greater emphasis on training and retraining will be crucial to the reintegrate these people into society.

The gravity of this problem is discussed in the World Bank report entitled *Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience* which claims that, "higher education is still very elitist. Although few countries collect data on the socio-economic origin of students, household survey data clearly indicate that the majority of students come from wealthier families. A principal reason that attendance at tertiary institutions, especially those institutions with the best instruction and finest reputations, remains heavily biased in favour of students from wealthy families is

that children from poorer families have much more limited access to good quality primary and secondary education” (World Bank:1)

Thus, clearly a more equitable situation must be created in this regard.

Possible Solutions

These lie in the promotion of the targets of action elaborated by UNESCO on the occasion of the World Social Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 1995). Inter alia, these cover endogenous capacity building, participation in all areas of social development, due recognition of cultural diversity, a new vision of employment and work, access to science, technology and communication for all social groups and the reinforcement of endogenous skills in social policy-making as well as in its evaluation and management.

Achieving greater equity of participation in higher education is important for economic efficiency and ultimately for social justice and stability. Preferential admissions policies to increase the proportion of lower-income, ethnic minority and female students will not adversely affect higher education quality if overall selectivity is high, if remedial assistance is available, and if concomitant efforts are made to increase the average quality of secondary education.

However, the report of the sixth session of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century noted that "a number of observations on recent trends in assistance to education revealed some contradictions. On the one hand, many major bilateral and multilateral agencies (and chief among them, the World Bank) have renewed their emphasis on education; on the one hand, the current economic situation has led many agencies and governments to reduce spending on education, or to require more evidence of direct productivity gains resulting from assistance programmes. Furthermore, while the alleviation of poverty is a major, indeed overriding, concern of agencies, it has proved extremely difficult to target assistance to move towards this goal."(UNESCO:2)

This paradox indicates that, though the main solutions have been identified, donors are reluctant to provide the funding necessary for their implementation. Countries cannot invest seriously in education (including higher education) without strong donor support as solutions depend on adequate financial resources. The disparity between these two elements has thus become one of the major factors impeding the effectiveness of international co-operation today.

Women and Higher Education

Basic Issues

As the family approaches the conclusion of the 20th century, its well-being has been challenged by the increasing gap between men and women. Forced into unfamiliar, and often unwelcome change, because of the collapse of political, economic and social systems, men and women have had to reflect and focus on the evolution of their relationship.

People who are preparing for the 21st century are idealizing change for the betterment of humanity - change that is nevertheless rooted in the co-operation of men and women. Unfortunately, harsh reality reminds us that women and men do not share common ground in rights, choices and opportunities. Women often suffer from substandard economic development that is fostering greater illiteracy among other inequities. Internationally, too little has been done by society to enhance the role of women, thus demonstrating that this incapacity regarding women's rights ultimately undermines the unity of citizens.

From the industrialized to the least developed countries, there are common issues related to women which can unite all citizens. In particular, the goals of equality, peace and development for women form a platform which encompasses many of the challenges involved.

The first draft of *Action for Development, Equality and Peace* prepared for the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995) emphasized inequality in access to education and health, as well as in related services and strategies which maximize the use of women's capacities. It stated that education is a key to development but noted that the educational opportunities offered to women have often contributed to a mere reinforcement of traditional female roles. As a result, women do not enjoy full partnership in society. The impact of education in terms of social change is now more widely acknowledged and is thus viewed as a worthwhile investment. However, if education is to be a useful tool for women to act as agents of change, it must respond to their practical needs and include training in fields such as science, technology and communications.

This document, designed to table the issues for discussion in Beijing and for subsequent action thereafter, noted with satisfaction that, overall, boys and girls have vastly improved equality regarding their access to primary and secondary schooling. Moreover, there is increasing parity at the tertiary level. Nevertheless, the impact of this more equal access will not be felt for some time and, despite this improvement, major problems persist. For example, almost a billion people worldwide - two thirds of them women - remain illiterate. In certain regions, girls still meet discrimination in access to education and training and can suffer from reductions in spending on education and health services resulting from structural adjustment policies.

It is important that countries fulfil their responsibilities to women and girls, since experience has shown that investment in their education pays significant dividends in economic growth, in improved health and in the quality of life for women and men alike. For these reasons, the fundamental question for girls entering school is whether they will receive quality education which will prepare them to enter any field, expose them to science and technology, stimulate their creativity, build up their self-esteem and be structured so as to prevent them from dropping out prematurely. For adult women, the challenge is to provide education and training that are cost-effective and can help them overcome the consequences of past discrimination which has often left them lacking in essential skills. The aim must be to offer women who have been deprived of education at the earlier stages of their life new opportunities to gain knowledge and know-how so as to enhance their personal development and contribution to their communities.

Adult Education and Higher Education: the Need for a Flexible Response

The position paper presented by the Director-General of UNESCO at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and entitled *A UNESCO Agenda for Gender Equality* states that "Adult education facilitates skills training and retraining in a society in which the skills needed for survival are rapidly changing. Women still lag behind, despite the fact that women might be better prepared than men to confront uncertainties and instability, as they historically have had to cope with shifting life situations- imposed mainly by child bearing and rearing and economic trends which have made women move in and out of the labour market. This is largely the result of existing role patterns preventing women from getting appropriate education and training throughout different life-stages.

Adult education is crucial for women to keep up with new challenges and to compensate for past educational deprivation. Non-formal education, tailored to adult needs and interests, may contribute to financial autonomy and to strengthening participation in community life. For women in rural areas, or isolated communities where poverty strikes, the combination of relevant technologies and innovative teaching methods may offer new hope. Involving women in research and in development, use and control of technologies is of great importance and requires life-long education and training.

UNESCO supports distance education which has proved to be of particular value to women who often are less geographically mobile than men, due to family obligations and cultural factors. Community radio, local-language newspapers, mobile teacher teams and libraries, solar-powered transmitters, desktop publishing and satellites are all examples of distance education and learning across frontiers, effective means for reaching the unreached.

Higher education is a key component in the empowerment process, as it provides women with the necessary decision-making skills. To this end, and building on already existing inter-university networks which provide leadership and management training for women in higher education institutions, UNESCO will promote the establishment of UNESCO chairs in the field of "Women, Higher Education and Human Development". These chairs will seek to strengthen women's status and empowerment in specific professional fields. Chairs and their networks will promote the contribution of women students and graduates to higher education management, science and technology, community health, sustainable development, communication, population studies, and the development of a culture of peace. UNESCO chairs will also be established in support of gender studies and long-term strategic studies on development in Africa from a gender perspective.

The present gender imbalance in educational opportunities is a challenge to concepts of justice and development. It is equally a challenge to peace. The world deserves literate women and men, critically and constructively participating in shaping our common future."

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action articulated strategic objectives for governments to ensure equal access to tertiary education and encourage adult education. These objectives aim to:

".eliminate gender disparities in access to all areas of tertiary education by ensuring that women have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and by adopting positive action when appropriate;

.create a gender-sensitive educational system in order to ensure equal educational and training opportunities and full and equal participation of women in educational administration and policy- and decision-making;

.provide - in collaboration with parents, non- governmental organizations, including youth organizations, communities and the private sector - young women with academic and technical training, career planning, leadership and social skills and work experience to prepare them to participate fully in society;

.promote an educational setting that eliminates all barriers that impeded the schooling of pregnant adolescents and young mothers, including, as appropriate, affordable and physically accessible those who are responsible for the care of their children and siblings during their school years, to return to, or continue with and complete schooling;

.improve the quality of education and equal opportunities between women and men in terms of access to ensure that women of all ages can acquire knowledge, develop capacities, aptitudes and skills and ethical values needed to develop and participate fully under equal conditions in the process of social, economic and political development;

.make available non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive professional school counselling and career education programmes to encourage girls to pursue academic and technical curricula in order to widen their future career opportunities." (Strategic objective B.1, para. 82).

Also suggested are actions to be taken by governments to improve the access of women to vocational training, science and technology and continuing education and to develop non-discriminatory education and training.

Women's Issues and the Role of Youth

Youth organizations committed to sustainable human development and international co-operation can assist in implementing the new role to be played by women in society. For example, promoting the development of practical, global management skills that represent responsibility and accountability can serve as an essential tool for women in their process of empowerment.

Young people, including students, can approach issues related to women within the frameworks of their programmes and initiatives. AIESEC is one body where the members can co-operate with other organizations in a global context to promote a world of gender equality. The AIESEC International Traineeship Exchange Programme promotes understanding among young students all over the world thereby contributing to cultural interaction and capacity building. Education is the field in which AIESEC plays a leading role among youth organizations. As one of the topics addressed in its Global Theme Programme, AIESEC undertook to inform its members of the problems faced with women, to present the youth view on these issues to decision-makers and to help reinforce communication and co-operation among the different actors involved.

Another AIESEC project sought to ensure that women's issues are integrated into the higher education curriculum so as to sensitize students to the reality of their chosen fields where these questions can figure in many ways. In fact, this echoes the objectives of the

publication *Women and the University Curriculum* published by UNESCO and the International Federation of University Women to mark the 1995 Beijing conference. All major areas of the university curriculum are studied and the chapter on Agronomy, prepared by the IAAS, illustrates very clearly how, in this particular discipline, gender issues have direct impact on the development process.

These initiatives indicate that AIESEC and IAAS are energetically tackling their advocacy roles with regard to women's issues. This activity should also be taken up by all student organizations as they have a vested interest in the promotion and progress of their women members. Furthermore, this serves to demonstrate that youth people can and must urge the commitment of all sectors in the realization of an equal society in which men and women cooperate with each other and work together towards common goals. Following the Beijing conference, governments are being called upon to create a more favourable environment for the participation of women. At the same time, both the private and public sectors are being requested to take affirmative actions to allow women to benefit from this development. In all these arenas, students and young graduates must play their full part.

IV. Partnerships in Higher Education

Changes in Traditional Partnerships

Throughout this report, it has been emphasized that all people have the right of equal access to education and to other areas that enable them to fully contribute and participate in society. If mutual dialogue and action in these areas are established, social cohesion can become a reality. Citizens' groups, governments, the private sector and individuals must all take responsibility for ensuring that this is the case. It is not the duty of a single group or sector, but rather the collective responsibility of everyone everywhere. Indeed, this echoes the trend noted in the UNDP's 1993 Human Development Report that "People's participation is becoming the central issue of our time." And, more recently, the same orientation was encouraged by the Director-General of UNESCO in his reply to the General Policy Debate of the 28th General Conference (Paris 1995) when he advocated "... a global action plan for higher education, a kind of New Pact and a new alliance centred around some key words: autonomy, partnership, equity, pertinence and co-operation for development."

But, despite the clear importance of the role of and investment in higher education for economic growth and social development, the sector remains in a critical state throughout the world. In the majority of countries, it is still heavily dependent on government funding. In an era of widespread financial constraints and stretched education budgets, developed as well as developing countries are grappling with the challenge of preserving or improving its quality.

In reality, traditional social partnerships are now under review as governments everywhere seek to reduce their funding for higher education. The World Bank report, *Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience*, reads, "the crisis is most acute in the developing world, both because fiscal adjustments have been harsher and because it has been more difficult for developing countries to contain pressures for enrolment expansion, given

relatively low enrolment ratios. The result has been a dramatic compression of per student expenditures since the late 1970s....." (World Bank:vi)

This report analyses various experiences to show how developing countries can achieve the goals of greater efficiency, quality and equity in higher education. It documents the depth of the crisis affecting higher education systems throughout the developing world, notwithstanding variations in the size, diversity, the public/private dichotomy and funding levels which characterize the sector in different countries. Four key directions for reform, based on a review of country experiences, are suggested:

- **Greater differentiation of institutions, including the development of private institutions.** Elaborating on this proposal, the report says, "Increased differentiation in higher education, or the development of non-university institutions and encouragement of private institutions, can help meet the growing demand for higher education and make higher education systems more responsive to changing labour market needs." (World Bank:vii) Asia has been quoted as the region where the strategy of developing non-university institutions and encouraging private provision of higher education has been the most extensive and effective.
- **Incentives for public institutions to diversify sources of funding, including cost-sharing with students, and linking government funding closely to performance.** The report reads, " public institutions will continue to educate a large share, if not the majority, of students in most countries, even if the role of the private sector is strengthened and most new enrolments are channelled to private institutions. Experience shows that if public institutions are to achieve higher quality and greater efficiency, governments will need to implement sweeping reforms in financing designed to: (i) encourage the mobilization of greater private financing of higher education (for cost-sharing with students, through funding from alumni and donors and income-generating activities; (ii) provide support to qualified students unable to pursue their studies for reasons for inadequate family income; and (iii) foster efficiency in allocating and using public resources among and within institutions." (World Bank:ix)
- **Redefinition of the role of government in higher education.** The report explains that, "Rather than direct control, the government's responsibility is becoming that of providing an enabling policy environment for both public and private higher education institutions and of using the leverage of public funding to stimulate these institutions to meet national training needs efficiently. Successful implementation of higher education reforms has been shown to depend on: (i) the establishment of a coherent policy framework; (ii) greater reliance on incentives and market-oriented instruments to implement policies; and (iii) increased management autonomy for public institutions."(World Bank:x)
- **Policies explicitly designed to give priority to quality and equity objectives.** Priority objectives for higher education reform, against which progress can be measured, are: (i) increased quality of teaching and research; (ii) increased responsiveness of higher education to labour market demands; and (iii) increased equity.

Such proposals clearly indicate that governments are reducing their role as the prime funding partner in higher education and are actively seeking alliances from amongst the interested parties concerned notably the economic sector, private enterprise and students themselves.

In the new partnerships created, all stakeholders should be called upon to play their full role in helping to shape higher education policy.

The Student Community as Partners in Higher Education

In the past, students were considered mainly as recipients of education. In future, however, they must be proactively engaged in the entire educational process, and particularly at the decision-making level.

AIIESEC's book *Education and the 21st Century Citizen* defines the role of students as their organizations play a central role in creating the higher education institutions of the future. It says, "Not only should student organizations participate in developing the course structure, but they should also run activities which complement the university's role in society through:

Decision making

Students need to be heard and involved in policy making at school and also within the community. Close involvement with the issues at hand and access to a wide arrange of options can provide valuable feedback which can be incorporated into changes for the future. Curriculum development, community consultations and relationships with international student networks can be central to their participation.

Complementing formal education

Seminars and conferences on various topics are often run by student organizations. They provide practical information to students about areas that complement the existing formal education such as global issues, leadership skills and practical use of course material. Co-operation between student associations specializing in different fields is already taking place, bringing interdisciplinary approaches which provide interesting and innovative perspectives. Other exchange and reception programmes run by international student organizations bring an international atmosphere to the institutions and expose students to different cultures. All these activities should be encouraged and expanded to involve a wide student body.

Assisting the local community

Community activities and volunteerism are central to the development of the individual. Student organizations offer a large number of projects which depend on the active participation of the student body, and which contribute to a lively and meaningful relationship with the local community.

Being an information source

Over the years the different student organizations have developed a strong network of contact with other bodies (NGOs, the economic sector and intergovernmental organizations). Knowledge and information gained through these contacts have made many student organizations good authorities in their fields of activity. These networks also enable student organizations to participate in projects run by other bodies." (AIIESEC:89)

This raises the issue of collective responsibility emanating from individuals and groups. It has been said that today citizens have a greater capacity to bring about change in society, but that this depends on a foundation of individual awareness and action. Young people play a particularly important role in finding solutions for the challenges faced by society as a whole. Through individual and collective responsibility, they can equip themselves with the

knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for lasting peace and human security in the 21st century.

Student organizations can be effective partners in a number of ways. For example:

AIIESEC has undertaken case studies such as the 'Regional Youth Consultation on Higher Education Reforms' where they will organize a forum for young people from all the regions to gather student opinion. Their survey on 'Skills, Knowledge and Values for the 21st Century Citizen' with the Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum and partnerships with the business sector has paved a way for improving the methodology and content of Economics and Business studies. Also, they are involved with companies for human and social development, in the framework of Habitat II, the United Nations conference held in Istanbul, Turkey in June 1996.

ELSA's projects entitled "Legal Education" and "Law in Development" provide a platform for discussion that brings together students, faculty and the graduate world to exchange views and collect data and recommendations from all parties interested in these fields;

IFMSA is undertaking an analysis of the present situation of medical education by means of a standardized questionnaire and the preparation of both a European and a worldwide approach towards relevant student evaluation. The aim is to compare curricula and educational systems in different countries for the purpose of recommending changes;

IPSF has recently discussed an action plan to examine how students, together with professional bodies, national and institutional policy makers could effect positive change in the field of Pharmacy. Firstly, they would like to audit and evaluate teaching plans by questioning students, recent graduates and relevant bodies about higher education to find out if Pharmacy studies are adequately meeting the needs of the profession and of society. The results of the audit would then be forwarded to institutional policy makers (e.g. UNESCO and WHO) which, it is hoped, can help promote the changes needed at national levels;

IFSA, among its major goals, is introducing new discussion topics on Forestry education and on environmental education in general terms. Also, it is trying to give input to the traditional Forestry curriculum to ensure that this is responding to new social demands regarding the use of natural resources. IFSA actively co-operates in projects designed to support developing countries, as well as those with economies in transition, and organizes activities designed to promote technical, scientific, professional and socio-cultural exchanges.

In these ways, student NGOs are forging new partnerships which monitor the quality and relevance of their courses, which permit them to interface more effectively with decision-makers and which promote solidarity amongst their own members.

Conclusion

This student reflection on higher education will surely leave a final impression on its audience. Will this be positive or negative? This is not a simple question to answer given the complexity of the sector under scrutiny and its impact on social and professional development.

Today, it is a fact that young people are faced with many uncertainties. The historical events touched off by the end of the Cold War, the spread of democracy and technological progress have offered hope for a better future. In contrast to these recent achievements are the realities of persisting underdevelopment, the violation of human rights, population growth, environmental degradation, and other threats to human security, such as poverty and unemployment. The very foundations of sustainable human development seem under threat.

The WSCF report, *University Concerns*, reiterates the gravity of these social problems and the apparent diminishing ability of education, including higher education, to help resolve them. It states that, "in addition to the instrumentalization and commercialization of education, the changes in higher education also reflect a serious fragmentation both of knowledge and community in the university. This fragmentation is accompanied by a loss of a sense of coherence, a disdain for the search of truth, qualitative knowledge, community, harmony and the common good, and the loss of respect for the humanities and life-affirming values. Depersonalization is also marked by a loss of civility which in some places leads to violence."(WSCF:69)

However, despite this criticism, the overall outcome of the student debates is far from pessimistic. Amongst the participating NGOs, there is a strong conviction that:

.successful higher education in the next century must open itself to a process of helping young people to better understand the world and be educationally empowered to contribute to society;

.higher education will become both increasingly international and more community based;

.this sub-sector will, of course, continue to act as a principal forum for thought and discussion;

.any of the challenges and imperatives for higher education discussed here can be addressed by student organizations;

.the administrations of universities and similar institutions of higher education may, in fact, find student organizations a key to achieving their goals;

.students are amongst the main stakeholders in higher education and possess the vision, the responsibility, the intelligence, the skills and the conviction to become a full partner in the future of this domain.

This report has attempted to present the viewpoint of students on current issues of higher education and has situated these against some of the global concerns of the United Nations. This particular approach thus places their analysis of education and training in a unique light. The intention is to express the aspirations and concerns of the student community so that these may be clearly recognized and thus permit these young people to be involved more effectively in the future of their societies on both the personal and professional levels.

Last but not least, this report eloquently attests to the dual commitment of students - both to ensuring the worth of their investment in higher education and to directing this investment towards their role as citizens in a changing world. The student voice and the sense of social

responsibility demonstrated by these young people are powerful forces. It is hoped that these will be heeded by society, and particularly by the other stakeholders in higher education, both today and in the future.

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