

Globalization of Higher Education

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Cross-Border Higher Education: a Brief History

by

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It is a pleasure to be here for this important conference on the Globalization of Higher Education.

It is useful to begin by distinguishing terms. This conference is about globalization, a term used frequently in the last fifteen years to describe changing patterns in world trade: particularly the freer flow of goods, services, finance, knowledge and information across geographical boundaries and time zones. There is also the older term internationalization, which describes the exchange of ideas, the building of relationships and cultural understanding among nations that has been going on for centuries. Higher education has been a leader in internationalization, in ways that we will illustrate later.

More recently, the term globalization has also been applied to higher education, not always with a positive connotation. For example, some years ago when it was proposed to include higher education in the General Agreement on Trade in Services, there was an outcry, not least in American academic circles, about the apparent commercialization of higher education that this implied.

One of the manifestations of globalization is higher education that crosses national borders. Cross-border higher education refers to situations where: *teachers, students, programmes, institutions or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders.*

In this session Sir John and I will address these in a somewhat personal way. Our own experiences of cross-border higher education, which go back to the 1960s, color our perspectives on our topic: *Cross-border Higher Education: a Brief History*. We have been international students in both face-to-face and distance learning programmes and we have had diverse experiences of managing higher education in institutions and inter-university organisations in an international perspective. Our paths joined early in the previous decade when we worked together at UNESCO and helped it to engage with cross-border higher education as part of its wider agenda of giving globalization a human face.

We shall share the presentation. I shall begin with my early experience as a student, as Secretary-General of the Association of Universities of Yugoslavia, and then as a senior civil servant in UNESCO.

Sir John will then distil his own experience as an international student and describe his involvement in setting up cross-border programmes, both face-to-face and at a distance,

during his years as a university president in Canada and the UK. He will also refer to our joint work at UNESCO. A key thread in our presentation is that cross-border higher education long predates the current debates about globalisation and higher education.

I was first engaged in cross-border education in my secondary schooldays and obtained a GCE diploma from the University of London in the 1960s. I was living in New Delhi and sat my exams in the British Council offices there. Wolsey Hall provided the coursework and tutorial support from Oxford. It was a new experience, in which my tutor in Oxford gave me more personal support than I had ever had in a classroom setting.

In the 1970s, I continued my studies in Paris because, long before programmes like ERASMUS were set up, international mobility was considered to be a 'must' in small countries like mine. France was a preferred destination and a family tradition. Studying at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, I spent hours reading in the Bibliothèque Sainte Genevieve, mixing with international students during seminars and refreshing my knowledge of French.

In the eighties, I had the privilege of being the Secretary-General of the Association of Universities of Yugoslavia, a very stimulating period in my professional life. We worked on the strategy for the scientific and technological development of Yugoslavia and strived to bring Yugoslav universities into the mainstream of European integration.

We were signatories of the Bologna *Magna Charta Universitatum* in 1988 and got involved with the newly launched TEMPUS programme, the first EU student mobility scheme open to Central and Eastern Europe. We organized yearly international seminars at the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik adding an academic buzz at the end of the tourist season in this lovely city.

The end of the decade brought the fall of the Berlin Wall, a transformational event for the integration of Europe. I then began my international career at CEPES, UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education in Bucharest, a few months after the Romanian revolution and the fall of Ceausescu. It was an exciting time of change, of new beginnings and European integration. It was also the time of new divisions, civil wars and the disintegration of my country, Yugoslavia.

I had the privilege of working in one of the most beautiful palaces in Bucharest, my main focus being the UNESCO European Convention on the recognition of degrees and how to bring it more in tune with developments in which the Council of Europe and the European Commission were taking the lead. UNESCO's Europe Region consisted of 50 countries. It included the U.S, Canada and Israel, as well as the successor states of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. This brought a wider scope to the more restricted club of the 12 EU Member States or the larger 26 Member States of the Council of Europe.

Within this framework in the mid-1990s a US initiative GATE, the Global Alliance for Transnational Education, launched by educational entrepreneur Glenn Jones, aimed at providing US accreditation to universities operating outside the USA. It was a controversial

undertaking that caused mixed reactions and soon lost momentum. However, it highlighted an emerging trend: the growth of transnational or cross-border higher education.

In 1999 I moved to UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. When I arrived there I asked my bosses: “what do you want me to do now?” The answer was “Go global!” An important book “The Business of Borderless Education” had just been published. I met one of its authors, Robin Middlehurst, and worked with John Daniel as my boss. I remember him particularly for a statement that was revolutionary for UNESCO: “new need not be bad!”

The General Agreement on Trade in Services stimulated UNESCO’s interest in cross-border education. My OECD colleague Kurt Larsen and I encouraged our organisations to take a greater interest in the impact of globalisation on higher education. Things soon heated up when the US and the OECD held a forum in Washington on *Trade in Educational Services*. I attended for UNESCO and reported back that a speech by Pierre Sauvé that was probably intended to reassure had the academic community up in arms.

One result was that UNESCO and the OECD agreed to develop guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education. UNESCO made the Guidelines available in all six UN languages. One strong recommendation called for better dialogue and collaboration between exporting and importing countries.

UNESCO held a major world conference on higher education in 2009. Top of the agenda was the huge unmet demand for higher education in developing countries. Cross-border higher education was put forward as one of the remedies to this problem.

The Paris conference was preceded by six regional events. I am delighted that two eminent personalities linked to these events are present at this Dallas Conferences. Minister Naledi Pandor chaired the Ministerial panel at the Dakar African preparatory conference with great skill. Former President Uribe opened the Latin American Conference by a memorable impromptu debate with a protesting student.

Today, Cross-Border Higher Education remains at the forefront of higher education debates. The diverse forms of CBHE include branch campuses, franchises, joint programmes and courses delivered online.

Let me say a word about international branch campuses, a small but distinct part of cross-border provision. At the end of 2011 there were 200 degree-awarding branch campuses in operation globally, and some 40 more have opened since then. New trends include a shift in activity to the Far East. China, for example, has 17 branch campuses.

Branch campuses can have a number of benefits. They offer more opportunities for access to students, attract talent, and help universities to build a global brand. More important than their contribution to enhancing access is the role they can play in improving the quality of curricula and pedagogy as local and foreign institutions benchmark themselves against each other. But international branch campuses also

face numerous challenges, particularly related to the quality of the teaching-learning process and the student experience.

Teachers play a vital role in ensuring that branch campuses achieve their potential and many are criticized as being ‘empty shells’ because instructors do not follow the programmes of the parent institutions. Sending teachers to staff overseas operations – often called ‘flying faculty’ - poses challenges of sustainability and adaptation, whereas the use of local teachers can create questions about the genuineness of the foreign programmes.

Nevertheless, some UK universities appear to have achieved sustainable operations and US universities are becoming more active as in the network being built by NYU. However, there are also a number of examples of branch campuses shutting down. But in the larger context of cross-border education, branch campuses remain a marginal phenomenon. In China, for example, branch campuses and joint programmes combined account for only 1% of Chinese student enrolments.

The online provision of courses across borders hold more promise for increasing access significantly. Sir John will return to this in his remarks.

Sir John Daniel

Like Stamenka I will recall my own experience of Cross-Border Higher Education. Then I shall introduce the notion of post-traditional higher education and the challenges it poses for quality assurance.

The movement of students across borders goes back a long way. In the 7th century there were student exchanges between China and the Buddhist Nalanda University in northern India. Huen Tsang was a prominent scholar. Nearly a millennium later the Dutch scholar Erasmus, for whom Europe’s student exchange programmes are named, moved easily between the continent’s universities. I followed their example when I graduated from Oxford and wanted to study somewhere else. My mother told me firmly that if I was leaving Oxford I should at least go somewhere interesting.

It proved to be very interesting because I went the University of Paris and was completing my doctorate on the metallurgy of uranium just as the events of May 1968 broke out. A student campaign to reform higher education brought France to a standstill. The posters and graffiti generated by the events in May 1968 were a unique cultural experience.

Three years later, when President Nixon made his famous visit to China he asked Premier Zhou Enlai, referring to this student uprising, what he thought had been the impact of the French Revolution. Zhou replied that it was too early to tell. However, until their interpreter corrected the misunderstanding years later, the news media thought that the two leaders were talking about the real French Revolution, the storming of the Bastille in 1789. For years Zhou’s response, ‘it’s too early to tell’, was quoted as a remarkable example of China’s ability to take the long view.

So after four stimulating years I left Paris with a doctorate, a working knowledge of French and two children. I learned that studying in another country is immensely worthwhile quite apart from its academic benefits. In my subsequent career being able to work in French was a longer-term asset than my doctorate in nuclear metallurgy.

Fifteen years later I was president of Laurentian University in northern Ontario, one of Canada's two bilingual universities. We had the opportunity to create a satellite campus in the South of France – in a stunning location overlooking the Côte d'Azur. However, rather than simply creating a year abroad programme for our own Laurentian students, we decided to foster Canadian unity by opening up the programme to students across the country.

As Stamenka said, do not expect branch campuses to last forever. This one continued for a decade before the steadily increasing value of the French Franc against the Canadian dollar put the programme out of reach for ordinary students. But it was a great venture and many students voted it their most enjoyable and stimulating college year.

In 1990 I moved to the UK Open University as vice-chancellor.

Another feature of internationalisation is a readiness to hire leaders internationally. The Open University found me in Canada, it went to South Africa for my successor, Brenda Gourley, and the present Vice-Chancellor, Martin Bean, came there from Australia via the US.

The decade after my arrival at the Open University in 1990 saw brisk growth in the number of students taking the Open University's distance learning courses overseas. Today they number over 40,000 taking Open University awards. A further 250,000 students around the world are studying for local awards that include Open University materials.

The first pull overseas came with the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the space of a year groups from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Russia asked us to offer our business courses in their countries. They asked first for our MBA, but we found that only a minority of their talented people had enough English to study at a distance. So we translated our certificate and diploma courses into the languages of each country and helped them to put tutorial and student support infrastructures in place. That was over 20 years ago. Today there are still some 10,000 students in these programmes.

In the early 1990s, when people in continental Western Europe asked to study with the OU, we decided to operate throughout the European Community. Then we were drawn into other ventures, not just in the usual places like Hong Kong and Singapore, but also to Ethiopia, where the late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, and most of his cabinet did the OU's MBA programme. I have a lasting memory of holding a special degree ceremony in the Cabinet Chamber in Addis Ababa to give the awards to this special group.

What lessons did I learn from this experience?

First and foremost, I concluded that the overall aim of exporting distance learning programmes should be to strengthen the partner institutions in other countries. I am proud

that several of our partners, such as LINK in Russia and the Singapore Institute of Management, have become universities in their own right.

Second, partnerships are right in principle and effective in practice. For example, in the mid-1990s, when the UK Open University partnered with the Open University of Hong Kong to offer the MBA programme we took 40% of the market in the first year against close to a hundred other providers. The combination of an international brand and a credible local partner is very powerful.

After 11 years at the Open University I moved to UNESCO as head of Education. Stamenka was in charge of the higher education section and I encouraged her to work on globalisation. As she said earlier, promoting the globalisation of higher education in the early years of this century did not make you popular.

During a conference on globalisation at Laval University in Quebec City in 2002, eighty students turned up at lunchtime to protest at the presence of the World Bank. One threw a glass of water at Laval's president, which missed him and went all over me.

Quality assurance became the main focus of our work on cross-border higher education. During my time at UNESCO Barry McGaw was head of Education at the OECD. Together we backed the idea of jointly developing Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education – the first time such collaboration had occurred. By a nice coincidence, Stamenka, Barry and I are all now advisors to Academic Partnerships.

During my time at the Open University in the 1990s we laid the foundations for the its massive use of the Internet that was described by Martin Bean in his presentation. After 2000 campus universities around the world started to dabble in online learning, but it was not until the present decade that most of them began to take it seriously and create quality courses.

Academic Partnerships has played an important role in helping numerous US universities to offer quality online programmes at scale. To support this work we helped Academic Partnerships to publish a Guide to Quality in Online Learning last year. It was put out simultaneously in English and Chinese under a Creative Commons licence.

But as you all know, it was explosion of MOOCs from 2012 onwards that really put online learning on the map. MOOCs are already an overhyped phenomenon so I shall make only two points.

First, higher education is not just about teaching and learning – the most important function that societies give to their universities is the power to award credentials. At a time when youth unemployment is a major scourge around the world, people want certification of the knowledge and skills they have acquired, which MOOCs do not provide.

Second, offering courses free without getting revenue in return is not a sustainable venture.

However, the MOOCs craze has done us a great service in giving legitimacy to online learning for regular credit courses, which all institutions now take much more seriously.

MOOCs are one example of series of new developments that mostly have the aim of introducing greater openness to higher learning. We call them post-traditional higher education. Other examples are Open Badges, which open up the possibilities of certification to a wider range of players, and Open Educational Resources, which are making vast amounts of quality content freely available.

Open Educational Resources, or OER, are a good example of cross-border education because the Internet lets them fly around the world – and not only in a north-south direction. The University of Michigan uses OER created by the University of Ghana in teaching medicine.

But because of its less formal nature post-traditional higher education poses challenges of quality assurance. We are trying to meet this challenge in two ways.

First, Stamenka is working with the International Quality Group created by the President of the US Council for Higher Education Accreditation, Judith Eaton, to develop a quality platform, which could be a flexible process for reassuring users that MOOCs, OER and Open Badges have been created in a systematic and professional way.

Second, we have just produced a follow-up to last year's Guide to Quality in Online Learning. This new Guide to Quality in Post-Traditional Online Higher Education, which is intended to help all stakeholders address quality issues, is available at the conference.

Getting a grip on quality in post-traditional higher education is a work in progress. Indeed, that is true of post-traditional higher educational generally. We do not know what the future of MOOCs, OER, Open Badges, etc. will be. To adapt the exchange I recalled earlier between President Nixon and Premier Zhou Enlai: 'What was the impact of post-traditional higher education?' 'It's too early to say!'

Thank you.