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The challenges of higher education institutions in developing countries: Why capacity development matters

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ABSTRACT

Higher education (HE) is increasingly recognized for its contribution to socio-economic development, both in developed and developing countries. Investments in HE are investments in human capital leading to public and private returns. This recognition has contributed to the worldwide trend of massification of HE. Furthermore and related to this trend of massification, the HE sector is confronted with increased student mobility, a diversified student body, inequalities in access, growth of information and communication tools, increased autonomy, growing demands for accountability and debates on financing higher education. The HE context poses many challenges for higher education institutions (HEI), especially in developing countries: challenges that need to be overcome in order to show adequate performance.

This paper discusses the main challenges faced by HEI in developing countries. Covered are themes such as managing expansion, maintaining and improving quality standards, funding, improving labour market relatedness, increasing managerial capacity and implementing new forms of teaching and learning. It is argued that enhancement of organizational capacity of HEI is considered a prerequisite for meeting these challenges and for showing increased performance. The concept of capacity development, as a deliberate and goal oriented process aimed at increasing organizational capacity, is introduced. The paper ends by demonstrating that research on capacity development in HEI in developing countries is likely to contribute to performance of HEI and thereby to wider national socio-economic welfare.

INTRODUCTION

Aim and content of the paper

This paper is the first part of a research project into capacity development in higher education institutions (HEI) in developing countries and is planned to be the first chapter of a scoping paper on this research topic. The paper explores the context of capacity development in HEI in developing countries. It does so by answering two questions.

- Why is increased performance of higher education[1] (HE) required, especially in developing countries?
- What is demanded from HEI in developing countries reflecting the request for increased performance?

These questions will subsequently be answered in the following sections. Than the concept of capacity development is briefly introduced and how it relates to performance. The paper ends by demonstrating the relevance of research into capacity development in HEI in developing countries.

Systems perspective

Although this paper is focused on HEI, it takes a systems perspective and as such sees HEI as being part of a larger (higher) education system. Jackson (2003:3) describes a system as "a complex whole the functioning of which depends on its parts and the interaction between those parts." In social systems the parts are formed by human beings. Most social systems are characterised by openness to the environment and by purposefulness, i.e. being oriented towards certain goals including sustainability (Jackson, 2003; UNESCO, 2012). The World Bank (2011:29) translates the social systems perspective to the educational sector. An education system than encompasses "all learning opportunities in a given society, whether within or outside of formal education institutions. An education system consists of all parties who participate in the provision, financing, regulation, and use of learning services. In addition to national and local governments, participants include students and their families, communities, private providers, and non-state organizations. (...) The relationships, whether contractual or non-contractual, that connect them and their resources are what make the

[1] This paper uses the concepts of higher education and tertiary education interchangeably.

delivery of education services possible. In such a system, decision making does not reside with only one group; instead, important decisions that affect learning outcomes are influenced by all off these stakeholders." More specifically, the education system includes (World Bank, 2010):

- The full range of formal and non-formal learning opportunities available to children, youth and adults in a given country whether they are provided and/or financed by state or non-state entities (organizations together with their teaching staff, non-academic personnel and administrators),
- Beneficiaries and stakeholders (students and trainees, their families and communities and employers) and
- Central and local governments and their core policy domains that keep the system running including laws, rules, regulations, policies, resources and financing mechanisms.

Taking a systems perspective implies that functioning and performance of one part of the system, HEI in this case, is influenced by other parts of the system. The social systems approach is expected to contribute to the effectiveness of international cooperation in education (UNESCO, 2012).

Higher education institutions as subsystem

HEI are conceived as parts of the larger HE system in their country. However, a HEI can be perceived as a system by itself: a sub-system that consists also of parts and relationships between its parts. In this paper, the HEI system is considered as consisting of the following parts, or subsystems[2]:

- Teaching and learning (e.g. curricula, classroom practices, self study),
- Research (e.g. research programs and research activities),
- Quality assurance (activities and procedures aimed at assuring quality standards of research and teaching and learning),
- Human resources (quality and quantity of both academic and supportive staff),
- Facilities and infrastructure (physical and technological resources including e.g. buildings, libraries, ICT),
- Financial resources,
- Organisational aspects (e.g. structure, procedures, information, culture),
- Leadership and management practices and

[2] The listing of parts of the HEI system is based on insights from amongst others Altbach et al. (2009), Ashcroft and Rayner (2011), Toma (2010), Venture Philanthropy Partners (2001), the EFQM-model and the 7-s model.

– Governance (processes, policies and structures aimed at balancing interests of stakeholders).

From a systemic perspective, performance of HEI systems derives from the quality or capacity of the individual parts of the system as well as from the quality of the relations between the parts. Furthermore, HEI performance is influenced by the larger HE system it is part of and its overall environment. Figure 1 illustrates this systemic perspective on HEI.

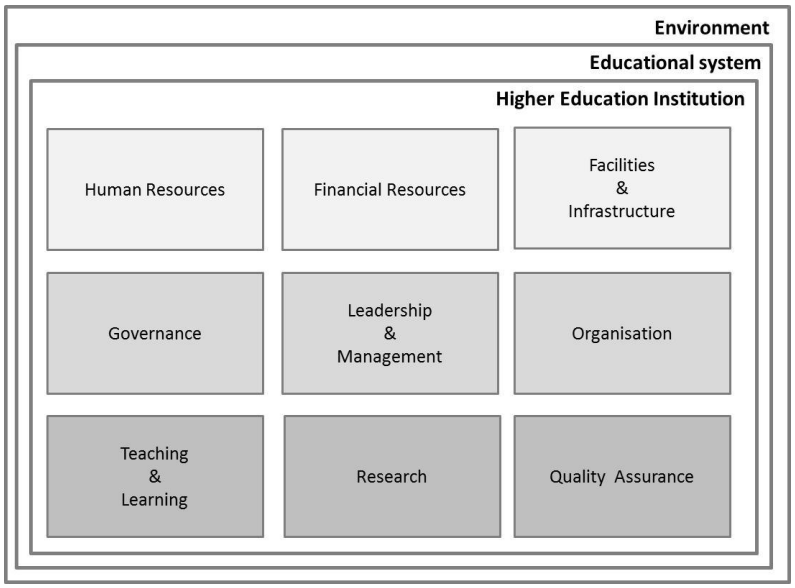

Figure 1: Systemic perspective on Higher Education Institutions

ECONOMIC RELEVANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND MASSIFICATION

As mentioned in the introduction paragraph, the first question underlying this paper is: why is increased performance of higher education required, especially in developing countries? This paragraph describes the growing economic relevance of HE, its public and private gains and the resulting trend of massification.

Economic relevance of higher education

Higher education is considered important to attain objectives of poverty reduction and increased socio-economic development. The World Bank (2000) concludes that "without more and better higher education developing countries will not be able to participate in the world wide knowledge economy in which knowledge supplants

physical capital as the source of wealth. However, both tertiary and secondary education long have been neglected in developing countries, because investments and improvements in primary education were expected to contribute more to reducing poverty and increase socio-economic development" (World Bank, 2000:16). The renewed focus on HE and its economic relevance relates to a change in the global context. The World Bank (2007:3) explains: "Unlike 20 years ago, when earnings of workers with secondary and tertiary education were low relative to those with primary education in many developing countries, earnings have now risen substantially, particularly for workers with tertiary education but also, in some countries, for those with secondary education". Next sessions describe both private and public gains resulting from investments in HE and the resulting trend of massification of HE.

Private gains of HE

Research indicates the private gains of investments in HE. Data from the OECD's Education at a Glance 2011 offer the following insights (OECD, 2012a). "First, education is generally good insurance against unemployment and for staying employed during difficult economic times. On average across OECD countries, unemployment rates of people with tertiary-level education have stayed at or below 5% between 1997 and 2009 while unemployment rates of those who have not attained an upper secondary education have surpasses 10% several times during that period. This general trend remained true even during the depths of the global downturn in 2009. During that year, the average unemployment rate across OECD countries stood at 4.4% for people with a tertiary education, 6.8% for those with an upper secondary education, and 11.5% for those who had not attained an upper secondary education. In addition, a higher proportion of people with a tertiary degree generally tend to be in full-time, rather than part-time work. Data show that the proportion of individuals working full-time is 10% higher among those with a tertiary education than among those without an upper secondary education. Not only are higher-educated workers more likely to be working and less likely to be unemployed, they are also more likely to be paid more for the work they do. Tertiary education brings substantial financial rewards to individuals, both in the short term and over a lifetime. A person with a tertiary education can expect to earn over 50% more than a person with an upper secondary or postsecondary, non-tertiary degree." Furthermore, research indicates that additional years of education contribute to maintaining people's health (Groot & Maassen van den Brink, 2007).

Public gains of HE

Also society as whole benefits from investments in higher education. Higher earnings of individuals lead to higher tax revenues from higher educated people as well as savings from the lower level of social transfers these persons typically receive. Based on Education at a Glance 2011, the OECD concludes that the net return on the public costs to support a man in tertiary education is more than $ 91.000, on average across OECD countries – more than three times the amount of the public investment. The net return on the public costs to support a woman in higher education is somewhat lower – $ 55.000, on average (OECD, 2012b). Also, higher education is considered crucial "for economies that want to move up the value chain beyond simple production processes and products. In particular, today's globalizing economy requires countries to nurture pools of well-educated workers who are able to adapt rapidly to their changing environment and the evolving needs of the production system" (World Economic Forum, 2010:5). Enrolments in and quality of higher education are the fifth pillar used by the World Economic Forum in calculating the competitive index of countries. Furthermore, research suggests increased research output contributes to economic growth (Inglesi-Lotz. & Pouris, 2012).

Massification of higher education

Growing economic relevance of HE worldwide has contributed to one of the key transformations in global HE, being the rapid growth of the sector. Growth started in the last four or five decades of the 20th century and continues after the turn of the century. Worldwide the number of students in higher education has increased from 98 million in 2000 to over 150 million in 2007, implying a growth of over 50% in less than ten years. Worldwide gross enrolment ratios[3] in the same period show an increase from 19% to 26% (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009). Almost all countries have dramatically increased enrolment in HE. However, large differences remain between more and less developed regions in the world. As illustrated in table 1, enrolment rates are lowest in the Sub-Saharan part of Africa. Also, enrolment rates in the Arab States, in Central Asia and in South & West Asia are below the world average. It is expected

[3] Gross enrolment ratio is defined as the total enrolment in HE (regardless of age) expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year (Altbach et al., 2009:193).

that demand for HE will continue to growth, mainly in the developing countries (e.g. Altbach et al., 2009:166, World Bank, 2010: 27), due to the expected contribution of HE to socio-economic development and poverty reduction as mentioned before.

Table 1: Growth in GER and number of students between 2000 and 2007

	GER		*Number of students *1000*	
Region	*2000*	*2007*	*2000*	*2007*
Arab States	20	22	5,546	7,146
Central & Eastern Europe	41	62	13,521	20,750
Central Asia	20	24	1,328	1,994
East Asia & the Pacific	15	26	24,467	46,451
Latin America & the Caribbean	23	34	11,316	17,757
North America & Western Europe	60	70	27,723	34,009
South & West Asia	9	11	12,060	18,409
Sub-Saharan Africa	4	6	2,432	4,140
World	19	26	98,304	150,656

Source: Altbach et al., 2009.

DEMANDS FOR INCREASED PERFORMANCE

This paragraph deals with the second question as mentioned in the introduction paragraph: What is demanded from HEI in developing countries reflecting the request for increased performance? It is argued that increased economic relevance and the related phenomenon of massification combined with other changes and developments in HE systems in developing countries demands increased performance of HEI in one or more of the following interrelated areas:

- Supply of educational services to a growing number of students,
- Supply of educational services to a more diversified student body,
- Increase the labour market relevance of education,
- Increase the amount of relevant research,

- Growing autonomy and accountability and
- Larger, more complex and more diversified HEI.

The sections below briefly discuss each of the above mentioned.

Supply of educational services to a growing number of students

A growing demand for higher educations requires on the supply side a balanced growth in staff, both academic and administrative, and in facilities and infrastructure. However, growth in the supply of HE often is hampered by competition on the labour market for qualified personnel. Ashcroft and Rayner (2011) e.g. indicate that especially graduates with higher degrees are also in demand by the private and government sector. Often, not enough qualified lecturers are available leading to situations in which lecturers with only a bachelor degree are teaching courses in higher education institutions (Altbach, 2011a). The situation is aggravated when, as often is the case, the income is not keeping pace with the growth in student numbers. Without sufficient investments in facilities and infrastructure, institutions are left with "inadequate resources for books and journals, equipment, computers and telecommunications" (Johnstone, 2011:177). Furthermore, lack of funding leads to an increase in student staff ratios creating situations in which "students literally are unable to find room in classes (Altbach, 2011a:2). High student staff ratios affect teaching quality by leading to disproportionally high teaching loads and to less time for personal interaction with students and for professional development. And, as a consequence of high student staff ratios, lecturing as a profession becomes less attractive eventually leading to qualified staff leaving HE. Both figure 2 and table 2 are included as illustrations of

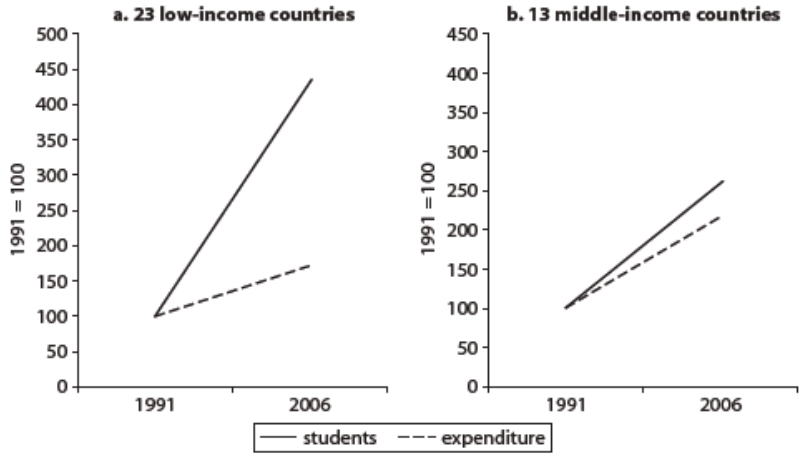

Figure 2: Change in number of higher education students and expenditure on higher education in two groups of African countries (source: World Bank, 2010:18)

deteriorated student staff ratios. Figure 2 shows the relation between the change in the number of HE students and in HE expenditure in two groups of African countries illustrating the seriousness of the situation in African low-income countries. It may come as no surprise this situation leads to concerns regarding the quality of the education (SARUA, 2012). Table 2 illustrates the East-Asian situation where as a result of the past decade's rapid expansion in tertiary enrolments and less faster growth in faculty members, student staff ratios are high in lower and middle-income countries. Most low- and middle-income countries in East Asia have much higher student-to-faculty ratios than the OECD average of 15 to 1.

Table 2: Student staff ratio in tertiary education in East-Asian countries compared to OECD-average, 2007

Country	*Student staff ratio*
Cambodia	23:1
China	19:1
Indonesia	15:1
Korea rep.	16:1
Lao DPR	25:1
Malaysia	20:1
Mongolia	29:1
Philippines	23:1

Singapore	13:1
Thailand	37:1
Vietnam	30:1
OECD average	15:1

Source: World Bank, 2012

Supply of educational services to a more diversified student body

Massification, internationalisation of HE and the importance of equal access lead to a more diversified student body. It is expected "the mix of the student population will become more varied, with greater numbers of international students, part-time students, and other types" (Altbach et al., 2009:2). New groups of school-leavers entering higher education might be less well-prepared (Johnstone, 2011). Altbach et al. (2009:45) mention the example of Argentina, where all secondary school graduates have free and open access to public universities. The completion rate (based on the ratio of graduating to entering students) in Argentina is less than 24 per cent. Less qualified students entering higher education require universities "to provide remedial teaching to address gaps in school-level education and to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills, increasing the teaching burden on staff" (Ashcroft & Rayner, 2011:67). Furthermore, different forms of teaching and / or other support mechanisms might be needed to increase the completion rate requiring different pedagogical and didactical qualifications of academic staff. Open and distance learning probably will access of adult learners (Ashcorft & Rayner, 2011:95), also requiring new qualifications of staff.

Increase the labour market relevance of education

The increased economic relevance of HE urges the need for graduates qualified for the labour market. However, numerous reports indicate mismatches between supply and demand of graduates. The Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA, 2012) concludes e.g. that "the majority of registrations in HE are in the humanities and social sciences, followed by registrations in business, management and other commercial fields. Registrations in the field of science, engineering and technology, fields which are of critical importance to national development, are

comparatively low." Also low- and middle-income countries in East-Asia have an uneven distribution of students across disciplines (see figure 3). These countries clearly have an extremely large share of tertiary students pursuing degrees in social sciences, business, and law or humanities and arts. Far fewer students are in other fields, especially in the field of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). This lack of diversification is expected to have implications for the responsiveness of education systems to new labour market demands since research e.g. indicates that in countries with more engineering students, the economy grows faster than in countries with more lawyers (Hanushek & Wössman, 2007). Besides offering STEM courses, HEI are expected to engage in and strengthen entrepreneurship education in order to contribute to economic development (Altbach et al., 2009:159; Ashcroft & Rayner, 2011).

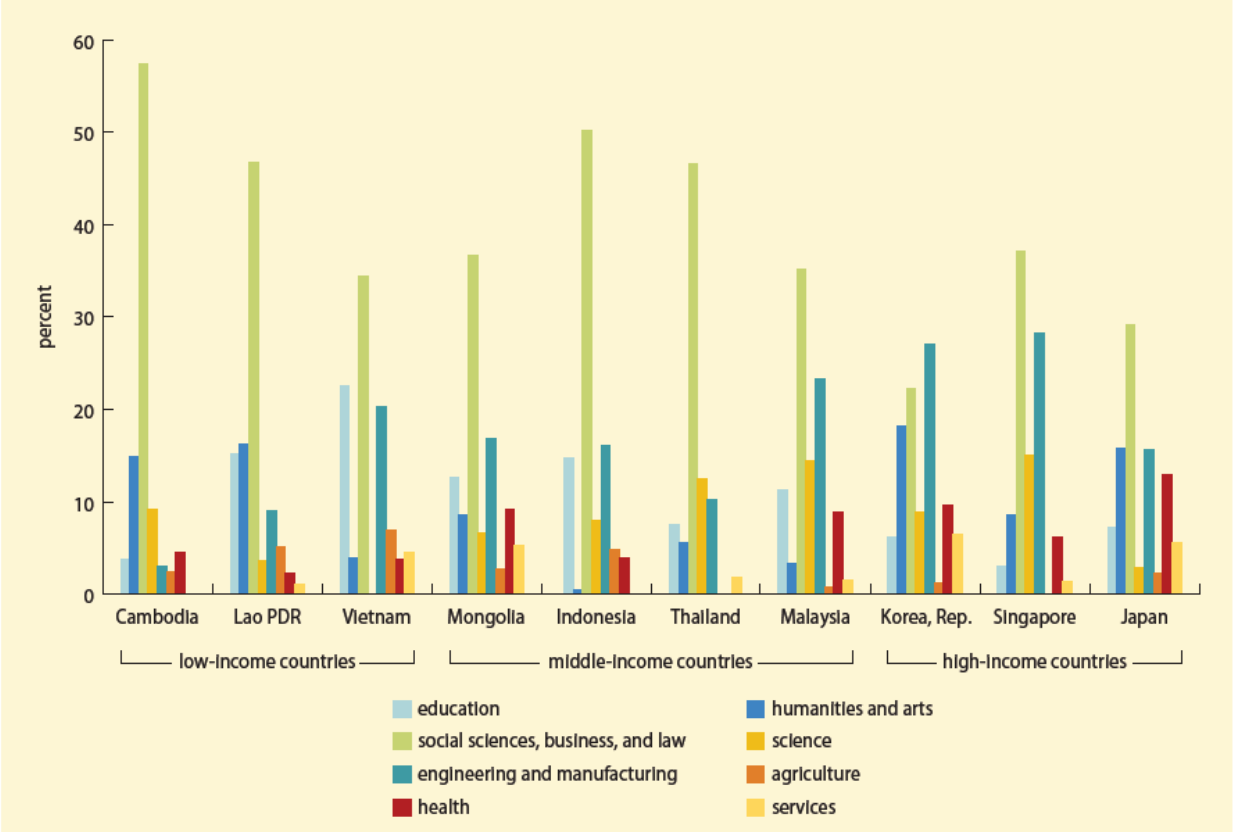

Figure 3: Proportion of tertiary student enrolments by field of study, 2008 (Source: World Bank, 2012).

Besides the mismatch in field of study, a problem often exists in the curricula lacking the transfer of up-to-date knowledge and the training of relevant skills. Employers need graduates in the possession of skills as problem solving, team work, creative thinking, communication, writing, ICT, negotiation, leadership and the ability to work

independently (Wang, 2012). Furthermore, employers expect graduates to have up-to-date knowledge in their field of study. This increased demand for labour market related education poses challenges for higher education institutions in several areas:

- The need for new and updated curricula reflecting the needs of the labour market. Curricula should not only address up-to-date and relevant knowledge but also include new forms of teaching and learning aiming at training professional skills and attitudes, e.g. competence based or project based learning.
- The need for procedures to maintain curricula to reflect recent developments in science and in practice and to include state-of-the-art knowledge.
- The need to build and maintain relationships with organisations in the labour market in order to learn about employers needs, about required qualifications and about employers and graduates satisfaction with qualifications achieved.
- Academic staff needs to have time and the attitude to pay attention to professional development.
- Furthermore, academic staff needs to learn and use new forms of teaching as included in the new curricula.
- The increased economic relevance of HE leads to new, economic values entering HEI that (partly) conflict with HEI traditional academic and cultural values and objectives and require the need for a balance.

Increase the amount of relevant research

Besides teaching and learning, research is a core function of HE, although probably not all HEI will be engaged in actually conducting research (see the next section for explanation). A well developed system for research and knowledge generation "is of increasing importance within the emerging knowledge economy, allowing a country not only to generate new knowledge, but also to engage in scholarly and scientific commerce with other nations" (World Bank, 2000:42). Ashcroft and Rayner (2011:220) agree by arguing that "it is important that some universities are able to generate knowledge to provide society and the economy with relevant solutions that ensure development, address problems at the grassroots level, and contribute to poverty alleviation". The important role of research for economic development is illustrated by Chinese policies that define the core missions of research universities as teaching, research and commercialization of technology (World Bank, 2012:79).

Strengthening of research output and relevance requires first qualified staff. However, many developing countries have very low ratios of faculty holding doctorates degrees (SARUA, 2012:10; World Bank, 2012:79). Second, to spread results of research and appreciate the understanding and role of research, a stronger relationship between teaching and research seems necessary (Altbach et al., 2009:139; SARUA, 2012: 10; World Bank, 2012:81). Both in HEI with and without a research function, research is expected to be in the curriculum. Third, the availability of an adequate infrastructure and supportive funding is a prerequisite for increasing research output (Ascroft & Rayner, 2011:214; SARUA, 2012:18). And fourth, building and strengthening university – industry linkages is a prerequisite for industry relevant research. These might take one or more of the following forms: consulting, technical assistance, sharing of equipment and laboratory space, development and delivery of training programs, contracts for technology service, industry funded research, patent licensing and sales and university-affiliated enterprises, also known as start-ups / spin-offs (Altbach et al., 2009; World Bank, 2012). Increased university – industry linkages are expected to contribute both to increased relevant research output and to additional funding for HEI. However, faculty should have a minimum level of understanding and appreciation of business and entrepreneurship (World Bank, 2012:79). Furthermore, increased knowledge on writing grant proposals is a prerequisite to help building the HEI funding.

Larger, more diversified, more connected and more complex HEI

Growth in student number leads to HEI as larger organizations with more employees and larger budgets. However, it is expected the pool of HEI will become more heterogeneous. While still an overemphasis exists on the traditional research university form (Johnstone, 2011:178), many expect a more diversified landscape in the HE system in order to enable the system to cope with the demands posed on education and research in the tertiary education sector as described in this paper (e.g. Altbach et al, 2009:167; World Bank, 2009). The World Bank (2000:48) states: "A diverse system, with a variety of institutions pursuing different goals and student audiences, is best able to serve individual and national goals. Recognizing the nature and legitimacy of this diversity helps ensure there are fewer gaps in what the system can provide, while preventing duplication of effort." An effective HE system is expected to consist of a

combination of different kinds of HEI[4] - either public or private - such as (Altbach et al., 2009; Ashcroft & Rayner, 2011; World Bank, 2000):

- Research universities aimed at achieving research excellence and providing high quality education.
- Provincial or regional universities focussing predominantly on producing large numbers of graduates, especially those who can meet local skills requirements.
- Professional schools provide training in fields such as law, medicine, business, and teaching, as well as other areas outside the jurisdiction of traditional arts and sciences faculties.
- Vocational schools, comparable to professional schools but at a different level. They may be part of the secondary or of the post-secondary system.
- Virtual universities and distance learning having the ability to reach students in remote areas and adult learners.
- Undergraduate colleges focussing on undergraduate tertiary education.
- Graduate institutes aimed at postgraduate education.
- Polytechnics or institutes of technology with the majority of programs or degrees focussing on education regarding applied technology.
- Comprehensive universities encompassing a number of different teaching programs and research activities.

Besides growth and diversification, HEI need to become more interconnected with organisations in the labour market, with industry, with other HEI and with other 'suppliers in the HE supply chain" (a.o. Ashcroft & Rayner, 2011:80; World Bank 2012:82). Growing interconnectedness is one of the reasons for increased complexity of HEI. Other factors contributing to more complex organisations are the emergence of new and more diversified forms of teaching, learning and student support and the increased autonomy and accountability (as described in the section below). Finally, changes affecting HEI as mentioned in this section lead to 'universities as corporations' searching for a balance between traditional academic values and new values as required by the HE environment (Altbach, 2011b).

"The increased size of HEI in a system undergoing massification has important implications for the management and governance of HEI themselves." (Ashcroft & Rayner, 2011:103). Strengthening managerial and leadership capacity and skills at

[4] No generally accepted categorization and terminology exists for HEI in diversified HE systems. Diversification differs per system and new forms of HEI emerge all the time.

different levels of the organisation is required in order to contribute to long term strategic planning and to more short term planning and control. Furthermore, organisational structures have to be adjusted and built and systems and procedures have to be designed to meet the growing demand for education and research.

Growing autonomy and accountability

"As HE systems expand, it becomes increasingly difficult for centralized bodies such as Ministries of Education to be involved in the day-to-day management of each university. (...) As a consequence, there is a movement throughout the world toward HEI being granted more management and academic freedom and institutional autonomy. In most case, this autonomy is tempered with increased accountability to the stakeholders of the institution." (Ashcroft & Rayner, 2011:58). This trend of growing autonomy and accountability introduces new tasks in HEI and influences the work of leaders and managers and of academic and supportive staff. Higher autonomy, lump sum budgets and formal quality assurance systems require new ways of working: planning, decision making, designing policies and procedures, reporting and monitoring. This often leads to the introduction of new functions and departments. Also, these new tasks require an organisational culture characterised by transparency and responsibility.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis as described in this paragraph it can be concluded that society expects improved HEI performance in various (interrelated) parts of the HEI system. Without meaning to be exhaustive, the following can be mentioned.

- Teaching and learning: new forms of teaching and learning for new learners and for new learning goals, new curricula, relations with employing organisations and supplying schools.
- Research: industry – university linkages, student participation in research.
- Quality assurance: policies, structures, procedures and culture to meet and maintain internal and external quality standards.
- Human resources: more and better qualified staff - both academic and supportive – resulting from increased performance in recruiting, developing and retaining staff.
- Facilities and infrastructure: e.g. class rooms, libraries, laboratories, ICT-infrastructure needed to support developments in research, teaching and learning.

- Financial resources: new HEI initiatives on funding both research and teaching and learning, planning and control.
- Organisational aspects: structures, procedures and culture facilitating and supporting developments in other parts of the HEI system.
- Governance: policies, structures, procedures and culture to ensure transparent balance between interests of different stakeholders.
- Leadership and management: create vision of future direction of HEI related to external demands and build, enable, lead and manage the organisation in line with this vision.

Increased HEI performance asks for capacity development in one or more parts of the HEI system. The next paragraph briefly introduces the concept capacity development, how it relates to performance and what is known specifically on capacity development in HEI in developing countries.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Capacity development and related concepts

Capacity development is one of the topics studied in development studies, a multidisciplinary branch of social science which addresses issues of concern to developing countries and that has placed a particular focus on issues related to social and economic development. A large body of literature on capacity development exists and insights and ideas on how to pursue capacity development vary and change over time. However, most approaches to capacity development use a results chain as a central model describing relations between capacity development and contribution to socio-economic development. Capacity and changes and results at different levels can be described by using the ripple model (Simister & Smith, 2010). The analogy is that of a stone thrown into the water. It causes ripples that spread outwards. Capacity development is like the stone; it causes effects that spread out into several levels. Figure 4 illustrates the concepts and relations of the results chain. Below, the concepts will be explained. However, it has to be noted no generally accepted definitions exist.

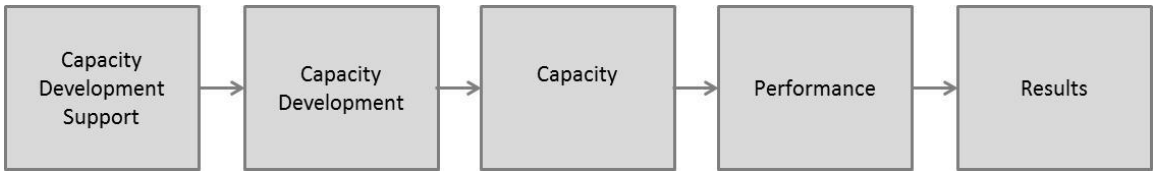

Figure 4: Results chain: concepts and relations.

- Capacity is about "the evolving combination of attributes, capabilities, and relationships that enables a system to exist, adapt and perform" (Brinkerhoff and Morgan, 2010:3) or otherwise formulated "capacity is the ability of a human system to perform, sustain itself and self-renew" (Ubels, Acquaye-Baddoo & Fowler, 2010:4).
- Baser and Morgan (2008:86) use the concept of performance to refer to "the ways in which organisations or systems apply their capabilities in daily use. (...) Performance is about execution and implementation, or the application and use of capacity. It is capacity in motion." In HEI performance is about teaching and learning, about doing research, about quality assurance and the functioning of other parts of the HEI system.
- Results are described as "the substantive development outcomes that represent improvements in human welfare, such as gains in health and education" (Simister & Smith, 2010:9). Results clearly relate to e.g. the quantity and quality of graduates and research output.
- Capacity development is about changes in capacity, either positively or negatively contributing to a systems level of capacity.
- Capacity development should be distinguished from capacity development support: "deliberate efforts to make capacities grow, (...), the purposeful approaches and the professional repertoire used to deliberately stimulate, guide, strengthen, unleash, nurture, and grow capacities beyond the existing condition" (Ubels et al., 2010:4).

Research on capacity development looks into characteristics of capacity development support and tries to explain how capacity development support relates to other elements of the results chain. Areas of interest are amongst others the effect of different capacity development approaches and strategies, monitoring and evaluation of capacity development and capacity assessment.

Capacity development in HEI in developing countries

As already indicated, a vast amount of literature and research exists on capacity development. However, research rarely focuses specifically on capacity development in HEI. However, HEI are complex organisations operating in a complex environment. A

growing body of literature and research therefore focuses on HEI, especially in those countries with mature HE systems and relatively autonomous HEI (e.g. USA and UK). Furthermore, taking into account the growing importance of HE for socio-economic development and poverty reduction in developing countries, it seems reasonable to conclude that further research into capacity development in HEI in developing countries is relevant, both from a theoretical and a practical perspective.

Proposed next steps

As mentioned in the introduction paragraph, the research project into capacity development in HEI in developing countries starts with a scoping paper. The foreseen scoping paper aims to investigate the knowledge on capacity development in HEI in developing countries and to identify options for empirical research. In writing the scoping paper, literature on capacity development – as part of development studies - will be studied and used as a starting point. However, although focussing on the context of developing countries, this domain hardly contains any specific literature on capacity developing in HEI specifically. Therefore the scoping paper will consult also literature from two additional areas of knowledge. Organisational theory is the first additional area of knowledge to be consulted, thereby focussing on organisational development, change and performance. The second additional area of knowledge refers to HE, more specifically to aspects of higher HE as leadership and management, administration and organisation. Table 3 illustrates the relevance of each of the theoretical domains to the research topic.

Table 3: Expected contribution of theoretical domains to literature review on capacity development in HEI in developing countries

Aspect of research topic	*Organisational and capacity development*	*HEI*	*Developing countries*
Theoretical domain			
Capacity development	+		++
Organisational theory	++		
HE		++	

The scoping paper will focus on interrelated aspects of capacity development such as context, motives and objectives of capacity development in HEI, perspectives and paradigms, capacity development strategies, phasing of capacity development projects, interventions, tools and instruments used, assessing capacity development, monitoring and evaluation and contextual factors influencing capacity development processes. Empirical research topics and possible research questions within the field of capacity development in HEI in developing countries than will be identified based both on the conclusions from the scoping paper and discussions with experts.

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