

“Re-Imagining Education” : International Education and International Development

Presented at AIEA 2010 by Martha Bloem

“College and university students comprise the future economic, civic, cultural and political leadership of their countries. Given the increasingly global marketplace and world in which we live, these future leaders must do more than acquire knowledge in their chosen academic or professional field. They must also be globally aware, culturally literate and able to collaborate effectively across cultural, national and linguistic boundaries.” -- Sabine O’Hara, Higher Education on the Move

ABSTRACT

More than ever, institutions of higher education are embracing the concept of internationalization to prepare their students for a more globalized economy. Administrators must keep pace with mobile students who transcend boundaries both in the classroom through new technological means and outside of the classroom through the pursuit of educational opportunities abroad. Within this movement also exists an effort to create greater and more equal access to educational opportunities—to use education as a foreign policy and international development tool capable of effecting sustainable change by building the human capital of underdeveloped countries. However, while the costs of such a pursuit are easy to quantify, and are especially large when supporting international students from underdeveloped countries, the benefits are more difficult to measure. This study explores the ways in which institutions of higher education can measure their impact while playing a more innovative role in “re-imagining” the outreach and support they provide.

The demand for international education will grow by six million from 2000 to 2025.

PURPOSE

To provide institutions of higher education with a comprehensive and sustainable model of benchmarking mechanisms, institutional infrastructure, and academic program options to further diversify their campuses while remaining competitive in an increasingly mobile world. Partnerships with sponsoring agencies as well as external funding sources provide an accessible avenue to achieve this goal.

In underdeveloped countries, poverty is the single greatest impediment to higher education.

METHODS

This study synthesizes research on published works and interviews with administrators of programs and universities that provide educational opportunities to students who have a commitment to building their countries but who lack systemic access to higher education.

Sub-Saharan Africa’s outbound student population is three times larger than the world average.

FINDINGS

While the benefits of hosting students from underdeveloped countries are less quantifiable than the costs, they are tangible and worth noting in detail.

| Benefits to University | Benefits to Students | Benefits to Society |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New partnerships • Grant revenue • Public recognition • Campus diversity • Higher rankings • Contributions to research • Meeting mission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. graduate education • Job opportunities • Ability to effect positive socio-economic growth in home country • Effects on learning of other students • Broadened worldview | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human capital development • Indirect aid to sending countries • Greater educational access and equity |

The best institutions are characterized by a commitment to excellence, to fair and open access, and to diversity.

CONCLUSION

To move ahead of their counterparts in the diversity of students that they serve, institutions must be flexible and innovative in how they internationalize their campuses. Key to these efforts are collaborations amongst universities, Ministries of Education, and nonprofit or foundation partners. Utilized to their full potential, these types of partnerships can provide increased access to higher education while significantly impacting U.S. foreign policy. Effective use of a carefully implemented model of appropriate benchmarking mechanisms, institutional infrastructure, and academic program options, will better equip institutions of higher education to “re-imagine” their role in international education and development.

