

Societal Engagement as an Approach to Quality Improvements in Higher Education

UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research & Social Responsibility in Higher Education



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Quality Higher Education in the 21st Century: Achieving Effective & Adding Value, Kuwait

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What is the purpose of higher education?

- Training individuals for global labour markets?
- Doing research for peer-reviewed journals?
- Service to society?

Higher Education for Public Goods?



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UNESCO Second Higher Education Conference July 2009

‘Higher Education Institutions, through their core functions (teaching, research and service to the community) carried out in the context of institutional autonomy and academic freedom should increase their interdisciplinary focus and promote critical thinking and active citizenship. This would contribute to sustainable development, peace, wellbeing and the realization of human right [Higher Education] must not only give solid skills for the present and future world but must also contribute to the education of ethical citizens committed to the construction of peace, the defense of human rights and the values of democracy (UNESCO, 2009).’



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BUILDING KNOWLEDGE SOCIETIES

Societal View of Quality in Higher Education

High quality teaching to prepare youth for responsibility

- Learning to do (functional knowledge & skills)
- Learning to be (cultural anchoring & tolerance for diversity)
- Learning to learn (curiosity, questioning, reflections)



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Socially Engaged Teaching

Learning to contextualize theories & principles

- Linking curriculum to societal realities
- Using pedagogy of engagement in the real world
- Leveraging practitioners as teachers



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Societally Relevant Knowledge

Producing Knowledge for Change

- Appreciating local traditions of knowledge & languages
- Co-construction of knowledge for socio-economic advancement
- Innovations by crossing disciplinary boundaries (SDGs)



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Preparing Ethical Citizens

Higher Education for demographic dividend (not nightmare?)

- Culture of Quality in everyday life
- Quality for equity & dignity
- Quality as valuing the local & aspiring the global



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