

Chapter 2

Global Crisis in Higher Education

ABSTRACT

Postsecondary education faces underfunding increased competition and governmental pressure to improve student success. At the same time, many nations cannot meet their educational demand for greater access to higher education. This chapter introduces the national and global threats caused by being unable to train workers for the changing job market. The discussion outlines the need and how borderless online degrees can be a solution. Learning has changed. Today, the process may begin with the first tweet at breakfast, followed by blogging, texting, social media, and responses in the course learning management system. Students may assemble on Skype to work in teams. Borderless online degrees can be an inexpensive approach to make educations more accessible and to promote economic growth.

INTRODUCTION

Accessible, affordable higher education is vitally important to provide qualify workers for careers. The educational need is greatest in developing countries due to inadequate resources and rapidly growing populations. Without skilled workers, nations cannot attract and retain business that offers career growth. Instead, job opportunities will be limited to low paying jobs such as in tourism and call centers. Little more than a decade ago, e-learning was viewed as a radical, unrealistic idea (Marginson, 2004). The global economy, warfare,

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-8912-9.ch002

and social unrest make distance learning essential for developing nations to become successful participants in a skilled economy (Wright & Horta, 2018). As Lavankura (2013) noted, “A globalized world is inescapable” (p. 666). For every nation, skilled workers are the key to economic development.

The international challenge is to make higher education accessible in poor nations with rapidly growing populations. The Earth was home to 170 million people two millennia ago, which is approximately the population of Nigeria in 2016. Before modern medicine and the Industrial Revolution, national populations grew very slowly, increasing to just 1.2 billion people in 1850. In less than a hundred years, the world population has doubled. Following World War II, growth accelerated, doubling the planet’s population again in just 34 years to 4.8 billion people. By 2050 the number of people on Earth will reach 10 billion.

Many of the world’s nations are unable to adapt to the increasing need for educated workers. Throughout human history, only a fraction of citizens needed to be educated. Skills were learned at work or from parents. Today, business and industry need millions of workers with skills that can only be acquired through education. Graduates must be able to use computers, access information, analyze, communicate, and work in teams. Today’s workers must be gender-, ethnic-, and culturally literate. There are diminishing job opportunities for unskilled workers in the information age. Ongoing professional development is required to remain employable. Good governance requires citizens that can assimilate and assess information to make informed decisions. Solutions for environmental, social, and political issues increase the need for educated citizens. A hundred years ago, people lived locally. Success involved working with neighbors and being part of the community. That community has now grown in size. Brexit, climate change, migration, terrorism, and trade wars are no longer someone else’s problem.

The challenge for every nation is how to meet the new educational demands for skilled workers and literate citizens. Global business knows no boundaries and can locate in different countries. Kapoor (2018, November 13) summarized the challenges for nations like India that must reduce the technology gap and increase educational access. Likewise, China, which has become an economic giant, has not yet made education universal and available in all regions (Luo, Guo, & Shi, 2018). The challenge facing India and China is how to educate 2.8 billion people for a changing global economy

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