

**UNESCO**

UNESCO-CEPES  
EUROPEAN CENTRE  
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

**Higher  
Education  
in Europe**

In this issue:

**Developmental Dialogues in the Context of Education for  
all and Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

Vol. XXX, No. 3-4, 2005

# Higher Education in Europe

Volume XXX Number 3-4 2005

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## From the Editors

In a change to the previously announced themes for issues 3 and 4 of Higher Education in Europe, the editors have taken this opportunity to prepare a special double issue to mark the landmark anniversaries in 2005 of 60 years since the founding of the United Nations, and 30 years since the first issue of the UNESCO-CEPES journal, Higher Education in Europe. This volume is not only a celebration of the importance and longevity of both institutions, but also reflects the diversity of dialogues for development in higher education that both have contributed to during their respective histories.

Since 1945, Education has been an important strategy for development policy of the United Nations, and specifically one of the key roles of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 1972, the acknowledgement that higher education is of vital importance to national, social and economic development was further confirmed with the founding of the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education. The Education for All (EFA) Project, aimed at achieving universal primary education and reducing illiteracy, launched at the Jomtien World Conference in 1990 and at the follow-up Dakar Framework for Action, in 2000, made it clear that this founding principal remains as important to society today as it did 60 years ago. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) furthered the commitment to “ensure that children everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling” and to “eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education... and to all levels of education no later than 2015”<sup>1</sup>.

Moreover, the link between achieving education for all and higher education was highlighted by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan earlier this year, when he stated that “We need Governments not to forget higher education, when efforts to achieve universal primary education are scaled up. No single group can meet these urgent needs on its own. All of us – the Partnership, UNESCO and other UN agencies, and university networks and associations – must work together to support Governments and higher education institutions...”<sup>2</sup>

An appropriate way to start this particular issue is therefore with John Gay’s extended study of Jeffrey Sachs’ comprehensive analysis of the background, needs and solutions in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) which were presented in his book *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. Understandably, the role of education in this pursuit is “a must”.

In this issue, Victor Ordonez, Mary Ann Maslak and Andreas Otto Brunold look at EFA from the perspectives of Higher Education, Gender Equity and Sustainable Development respectively – themes which have recently begun to receive more attention, as policy-makers acknowledge the essential roles of tertiary and teacher education in meeting the EFA goals by 2015.

Education is both an incubator for external change and an innovator of internal reform. Higher education in the 21st Century is experiencing arguably unprecedented challenges and changes in its history – in the quality of curricula, pedagogy, organizational structures, funding, faculty, enrolment policies and programme offerings. An important element of discussions about higher education also relates to its role vis-à-vis other levels of education. In this regard it is worthy to recall how this problem is expressed in the World Declaration on Higher Education, “... equity of access to higher

education should begin with the reinforcement and, if need be, the reordering of its links with all other levels of education, particularly with secondary education. Higher education institutions must be viewed as, and must also work within themselves to be a part of and encourage, a seamless system starting with early childhood and primary education and continuing through life”<sup>3</sup>.

The diversity of issues and their various implications for different regions and national contexts is central to the mission and role of UNESCO-CEPES and is reflected in this anniversary issue. The authors examine, within the broad framework of quality assurance, issues ranging from student participations in higher education, the uses of ICT in tertiary teaching, the application and effect of new quality management tools in higher education institutions and the perceptions of different types of higher education institutions.

A constructive dialogue of experiences in the bio-sphere of higher education (both positive and negative) can but only lead to informed decisions and policies for harmony, growth and prosperity. It is hoped that the papers presented in this anniversary issue, together with the analysis of other “voices” in our Tribune and Book Reviews sections will further dialogues of issues of emerging importance to higher education. By appreciating such a diversity of opinions and experiences, it is hoped that enduring and appropriate national development in higher education can be achieved. Development, diversity and dialogue represent not only a common goal of the United Nations and UNESCO-CEPES, but also a uniting debate on reforms in higher education in the European Region today.