Exploring Financing Options for Higher Education in Jamaica

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ABSTRACT

The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) funds seventeen tertiary level institutions (TLIs) inclusive of two Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). An initial review of the funding to these institutions suggested that the allocations were arbitrary as there were no correlation with their enrolment and missions. This led to the identification of the financing policies for HE which gave rise to the main question “What are the consequences (intended and unintended) of the different models adopted by Jamaica for the financing of higher education?” In tracing the evolution of HE in Jamaica four sub-questions arose which were:

1. What are the consequences of an unchanged financing model for a system that has shifted from a single provider to diverse providers?
2. What are the consequences of financing both a national higher education system and a regional one?
3. What were the philosophical underpinnings to the allocation of resources to HE in Jamaica?
4. What models are available to the Jamaican government for allocating resources to HE?

The fourth sub-question was used as the basis for the literature search and review. The issues of equity and efficiency were identified from the review as the main reasons for the states involvement in financing HE. Frameworks for analysing the consequences of the various Jamaican policies were also built from the study of the literature. The other questions were used as the background to the discussion and recommendations.

Grounded theory was the strategy of inquiry. The research drew on the views of Punch (1998) that the research questions and problems should direct the research instead of one's knowledge claims. Using interviews and documents and following the multiple processes of coding, analysing and recoding and well as the use of inductive logic, the research eventually identified some theoretical underpinnings which informed the recommendations for changes to the financing and resource allocation methodology for the Jamaican HE system.