

Higher Education, Global Wellbeing and the Refugee Crisis

Society for Research in Higher Education South West Network Seminar and the International Centre for Higher Education Management

Date - 30 September 2015: 1430-1630

Venue - Building 8 West, Room 3.14, School of Management, University of Bath

Time : 14.30-16.30 followed by refreshments, discussion and networking

Chair: *Helen Perkins*, Director, Society for Research in Higher Education

Beyond National Competition: Higher Education for Global Wellbeing

Rajani Naidoo, Director, International Centre for Higher Education Management (ICHEM)

Much of our focus is on how universities contribute to the economic and social development of our own countries. However, many of the major issues facing humankind such as the destruction of the environment, rising inequality and violence across borders can only be solved by countries and universities working together. In this context, the question of how higher education contributes to global wellbeing including the current refugee crisis becomes very important. Drawing on the theory of uneven and combined development, this presentation focusses on the barriers to achieving this vision such as particular forms of global rankings and powerful forms of conditionality imposed by powerful organisations. It celebrates trailblazer initiatives arguing that to turn the spotlight away from the competition fetish to collaborations promoting global wellbeing is both illuminating and inspirational.

The Refugee Crisis: The Contribution of Higher Education to Strengthening Communities

Johannes Tarvainen, Education Officer, United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Education plays an integral part in the protection of refugees around the world. In line with an approach to lifelong learning, the continuum of basic to higher education enables refugees to build their professional skills and support their communities in preparing for solutions. Highly educated refugees often take lead roles in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies upon voluntary return into their countries of origin. During protracted periods of asylum, highly educated refugee women and men contribute to the economic self-reliance and positive self-esteem of their communities, while serving as role models for refugee children to retain in school and aspire for their futures. The demand for higher education in refugee communities outweighs by far the availability of current opportunities. Alongside higher education scholarships, connected/ blended learning programmes reach out to refugees that are not in a position to study away from their communities. Expanded higher education opportunities through new initiatives driven by universities have the potential to immensely benefit refugees and their communities, as long as protection and legal considerations specific to refugees are taken into account.

The seminar will be followed by refreshments and informal discussion. There will be a collection box for cash donations to the UCU Fundraising effort for three charities who are doing essential work related to refugees:

Medecins Sans Frontieres (<https://donate.doctorswithoutborders.org/onetime.cfm>)

The White Helmets (<https://herofund.whitehelmets.org/donate/crowdfund/>)

Migrant Offshore Aid Station (<http://www.moas.eu/>).

SRHE SWHE Co-ordinators: Dr Lisa Lucas, University of Bristol and Professor Rajani Naidoo, University of Bath. **DBA(HEM)** Dr Robin Shields