

The Role of Universities and University Students

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Uneven progress in world

- Human progress uneven and mixed in recent decades
- Asia and Pacific region as a whole made more progress than sub-Saharan Africa but less than Latin America and the Caribbean.
- National level gains mask disparities among subregions, between countries and within countries

MDGs 2010

- In 2000, the Millennium Declaration was adopted in New York.
- 8 MDGs – identified priorities, with 18 targets to be measured by 48 indicators
- 2015 was set as target date to achieve most of the MDGs.
- In September 2010, world leaders reviewed progress, assessed obstacles and adopted action agenda (and pledged funding) to build on successes and close gaps in achieving MDGs by 2015

MDGs Report 2010

- Mixed report card - inroads in many areas but progress uneven and setbacks because of financial crisis.
 - Gains in poverty reduction, primary school enrolment , gender parity in education, maternal mortality
 - But inequalities persist with gaps between rich and poor, rural and urban, and disadvantaged/vulnerable

Impressive gains in Asia-Pacific

ESCAP/ADB/UNDP 2009/10 MDG report

Early achiever (already achieved MDG 2015 target) :

- Reduced gender disparity in **primary/tertiary education**
- Stopped spread of **HIV and AIDS and tuberculosis**
- Ensured proportion of protected area to maintain biodiversity
- Reduce consumption of **ozone-depleting substances**
- Halve proportion of people without **safe drinking water access**

Expected gains but....

On track (expected to meet 2015 target)

- Universal access of children to **primary school**
- Gender parity in secondary education
- Halve proportion living below \$1.25 per day poverty line
- **Between 1990-2005 reduction from 1 billion to 979 million living below \$1.25 per day**

BUT....

- Asia still has **majority of world's poor**,
- Lagging behind in important targets, especially those related to higher standards of health
- Disparity among **subregions ,country groups (LDCs)** and **within country**

Persistent and emerging challenges

- Threats to achievement of MDGs – slower economic growth, food and fuel concerns, governance
- New and emerging challenges
 - globalization
 - demographic changes
 - urbanization

Accelerating MDGs attainment

- Recognize that poverty and social development requires economic growth but growth alone insufficient
- Need to address issues like inclusion, social justice, inequality
- Need to target vulnerable and groups at risk; marginalized groups in rural and mountainous areas
- Focus on ecological issues and impact of climate change, especially on poor

Collective action needed

- Collective action to make services work for all esp the poor
- Interplay of policy makers, recipients, service providers
- Responsive institutions, empowered and assertive recipients, supported by civil society
- What is the role of universities and students?

Role of Universities and Students

World Bank STEP framework

Step 1 : Getting infants off to right start

Step 2 : Ensuring that all students learn

Step 3: Building job-relevant skills

Step 4: Encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation

Step 5: Facilitating labour mobility and job matching

- Prioritize the STEPS – different solutions in different contexts

Role of universities and students

- STEPs 3 to 5 of framework
- Universities provide knowledge/skills - underpinning of a knowledge society
- Provide theoretical knowledge to apply to real work
- Theories, tools, methodologies (statistical analysis, randomized trials, etc.)

Learning and using tools

Factors affecting child mortality

- Child mortality is correlated with
 - health expenditure per capita
 - child immunization
 - access to improved sanitation
 - government efficiency
 - literacy rates in total populations esp of women
- Regression results indicate the following factors are key:
 - health expenditure per capita
 - child immunization
 - control of corruption

Combining theory with practice

- Combine theory with practice to validate and situate theory in reality
- Service learning, work-integrated learning programmes
- Towards social/community integrated education to increase relevance of education to national development
- Strengthen both job-relevant skills and innovation skills

Service-learning

- Combines community service with formal curriculum
- Hands-on, uses students' knowledge as well as potential
- Students take active role, contributes to society, encourage civic participation (life-long)
- Reflection to assess and make connection between formal schooling and social/community learning
- Bridge between academia and community

Learnings and action

- Accelerating MDG agenda and addressing emerging challenges require innovative and fresh approaches
- Should not use obsolete and irrelevant instruments to address new 21st Century agenda e.g.-revisit pension systems established for shorter life span in Bismarkian times
 - review family welfarism in context of changing society and lifestyles
 - , broaden concept of social protection
- Need to think outside the box, move beyond the conventional , and not be behind the curve

Learnings and Action

(1) Holisitic

- breach interdisciplinary barriers

eg. health outcome not just function of income – Kerala, Sri Lanka not just correlated to income, but also to literacy rate, women's empowerment etc.

- reach across sectors/industries

Learnings and Action

(2) Hyperconnected

- Harness the power of new social media to challenge, influence , advocate, connect
- Innovate from the bottom – chaotic but smart (Tahir Square)
- Learn from and exchange best practices and cross-culturally from other countries

Learnings and Action

(3) People-centric

- Put people first (not bankers, shareholders.....)
- Grow and share – debunk trickle down
- Restore social compact

Learnings and Action

(4) Intergenerational Solidarity

- Foster relations between young and older persons, avoid conflict across generations
- Change values and mindset , nurture culture of care and compassion
- Promote continuous life-long learning (now a new pillar of active ageing)

Does it work?

- Accountability and effective monitoring
- Outcome measures and impact evaluation
- Balance what should be measured, what can be measured, and what is most useful to be measured

Co-create relevant and innovative solutions for a rapidly changing world.

Thank you