

”Would you like an M.Sc with that?”

Supplying education on a commercial basis
– implications from a student perspective

ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe

- 47 members in 35 European countries
- Largest student representative in the world
- Represents approx. 10.000.000 students.
- Does work on educational issues: quality, access, equality, mobility etc.
- Globalisation recently on the agenda

Trade in Education

Result of:

- growing global competition
- Increased market thinking in HE
- Success of individual countries
- Development of international trade regulations

Student concerns



Student concerns

- Education is not a product, students are not consumers
- "Education market" excludes majority of potential students (Ex. developing countries)
- Undermining democratic function of HE
- Exclusion breeds misunderstanding

Student unions in History

Organised

- Prague 1968
- Iran 1999
- Serbia 2000

- Finland
- Sweden
- UK

Conflictual

Co-
operative

- Seattle 1999
- Prague 2000
- Gothenburg 2001

- "Student initiatives"
- EU Student Vote

Disorganised

Why conflictual?

- Excluded from decisionmaking structures
- Untransparent systems
- Not encouraged
- Historical backgrounds

GATS

- Increasing market orientation
 - Focus on financial profit
 - Short sighted planning
 - Tuition fees establishment and increase
 - Long term negative effects?

Regulation of trade in education

- Unclear consequences
- Incentives and support needed, not legislation (Ex. Socrates programme)
- Universities and students both critical
- Student protests of historical scale

In summary:

- Unclear future consequences
- Consumer/provider notion is a gross oversimplification with unknown implications
- Students are not happy