



## Education for recovery

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Moderator: **Barbara Ischinger**, Director, Education, OECD

**John Bangs**, Assistant Secretary, Education and Equal Opportunities, National Union of Teachers, United Kingdom

**John Hope Bryant**, Founder, Chairman and CEO, Operation Hope, United States

**John P. Hearn**, Vice President (International), University of Sydney, Australia

**Michel Raimbault**, Associate Dean, HEC, France

**Jiann-Chyuan Wang**, Vice President, Chung-Hwa Institution for Economic Research, Chinese Taipei

“There is a real risk that this economic crisis will turn into a social crisis. We must act—and act decisively—now.” The subject of education is not usually framed with such urgency, but Barbara Ischinger introduced the “Education for recovery” session with the firm belief that education will play a key role in shaping the post-crisis economy and society.

**Jiann-Chyuan Wang** focused on Chinese Taipei’s experience during the crisis, particularly on unemployment and how that relates to education. He noted that Chinese Taipei’s trading and industrial structures are highly export-oriented, with exports accounting for 64% of total GDP. As a result of the recent steep drop in world trade, Chinese Taipei’s economy and labour force have both been hit hard. Mr Jiann-Chyuan suggested that to avoid high unemployment once the world emerges from the crisis, Chinese Taipei’s government should strengthen its manpower training programmes and related investment, and the national education policy should integrate more closely with industry.

Looking outward from his native Australia, **John Hearn** announced “it’s teamwork time”. Revamped educational initiatives should focus on developing international leadership through global partnerships among institutions of higher education, he said. The demand for international skills in the workforce will continue to grow as international student enrolment is expected to double worldwide to over five million by 2020. The educational systems that receive these students should be addressing major global challenges, such as climate change, economic and social equity, and the UN Millennium Development Goals. Research budgets should devote 40% of resources to such predicted challenges, while maintaining 60% of investment towards the pursuit of “fundamental knowledge”, which Mr. Hearn said tends to find its own applications. Across the globe, nations are trying to cultivate greater international perspectives in their higher-education curricula, but more needs to be done. “We must not forget the developing world,” Mr Hearn

advised. “We must engage in initiatives to develop sustained research leadership in their countries, by their nationals. It is utterly vital for sustainability and to mitigate brain drain.”

For **John Bangs**, it was time to get back to basics. “We need to examine the fundamental values behind education,” he said. “Unless they are the values that partner stakeholders understand, education will slip down the pecking order of priorities for individual countries.” In what might seem like stating the obvious, Mr Bangs pointed out that “high-quality education needs high-quality teachers”. He cited the recently published OECD TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) report, which noted that few countries have strategies for professionally developing their education staff. “It happens incidentally,” he said. “It’s haphazard, not strategically organised.” Mr Bangs added that it was “vital” that the findings of the report are used to feed into government strategies on developing teachers’ skills. Mr Bangs also asserted that it is important to look at the “suitability of the curriculum”. He deplored the “arid divide” that distinguishes between “academic” and “vocational” students. “We should be extremely flexible and optimistic about the needs of our students,” he said.

A great concern among business schools at the moment is reduced public spending, which generally leads to an increase in tuition fees, says **Michel Raimbault**. That could ultimately mean that middle- and lower-income students are pushed out of the system. Scholarships must be made more available, he said, so that students from lower social classes are not excluded from higher education. Mr Raimbault also said that business schools should be active in helping to find a way out of the crisis. He pointed out that many business schools sought to learn from previous financial crises. For example, he said that the business school HEC developed a case study on Enron. Now, he said, “we are facing one huge scandal that is global in nature”.

And, he observed, “What all scandals have in common is the race for profit.” Mr Raimbault cited three duties for business schools: to understand what happened, to remember what happened—“capitalism has a remarkable capacity to forget and move on. We have to remain a living conscience of what happened in the business world in the past”, and to find solutions.

“We must be able to propose alternative models,” he said. “We should be teaching management in the social context: business in society. There isn’t one business model, but many business models. We should propose different role models to go with these business models, and fight conformism.” Mr Raimbault concluded, “The overall idea is to go from bounded rationality to bounded greed. Bounded greed means more research and more teaching.”

“With the exception of the issue of the environment, there is not a more important issue than education,” asserted **John Hope Bryant**. “This is not an economic crisis; this is a crisis of virtue, a crisis of values,” he said. “This is not a recession; it’s a reset.” Citing Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Richard Branson as a few examples, he said that the passion of ideas drove these people to their success, not the passion for money. Still, he proposed

that “maybe the ultimate language is the language of money” and said that far too many people are financially illiterate. “If you don’t understand the language of money, if you don’t have a bank account in 2009, you are an economic slave.” Mr Bryant suggested that high drop-out rates around the globe (30% average in the US, with more than 50% among young, urban black men) indicate that students don’t believe that education is relevant to their future. He suggested creating a “culture of entrepreneurship” and offering a programme in financial literacy from kindergarten through university.

In questions from the floor, an audience member asked whether “greener” curricula should be developed. Mr Bangs replied that “Nowhere does ‘bounded greed’ apply more than to sustainable development. He cited the OECD PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) study, which found that the more students knew about climate change, the more pessimistic they became. But, he added, experience shows that pessimism can dissipate if students feel they are actively engaged in making a difference. Mr Bryant suggested that curricula should be “inspirationally relevant”, practical, and at scale.

Another audience member commented that there seems to be a fundamental bias toward academic and business curricula to the exclusion of vocational training. Mr Hearn noted that many students now in tertiary education have expectations that can’t be met. He said that in building leaders of the future, the world “need curricula that are more flexible than in the past. People need to question and think.” Mr Raimbault asserted that “Every country needs an elite, very high-quality system of some kind... The elite schools should be highly selective.” However, he also said that diversity is the key to the success of these schools and of their students, “who should be challenged by different ways of thinking.”

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