Equity and Human Capital Development: the Role of Higher Education

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OECD / IMHE Conference on Higher Education in Regional and City Development
Sevilla, 10-11 February 2011
• in spite of rapid enrollment growth worldwide, tertiary education remains largely elitist, with strong disparities in access and success persisting in high, middle and low income countries.
tertiary coverage in Chile

enrollment rate by income quintiles
**elusive equity**

- Mexico (2005)
  - only 1% of 15-24 year old from poorest quintile attend tertiary education
  - 32% from richest quintile

- USA: probability to access Ivy League university is 8.3% for lowest quintile and 50% for richest quintile

**equity groups**

- low-income groups
- females
  - non-university institutions
  - disciplines (agriculture, medicine, business, science and engineering programs)
  - leadership positions
• minorities (ethnic, language, religion, culture, age, etc.)
  – ethnic minorities in Malaysia (evolving situation of Bumiputras, Chinese and Indians)
  – Israel: Arab population = 19% of total population, but only 11.2% of students at universities
  – growing barriers faced by children of migrants (Germany, Italy, Spain, USA, Netherlands)

equity groups (III)

• people with disabilities
  – in Netherlands, students with disabilities are twice as likely to dropout as other students
  – in USA, students with disabilities are 4 times less likely to continue graduate studies
  – in France, only 7% of universities have a system to accommodate students with disabilities
message 2

• inequality in tertiary education is, to a large extent, an extension of inequality at lower levels of education
  – reflecting structural barriers (income, ethnicity, gender, language, culture, religion, disability, caste, etc.)

lack of preparation

• Spain:
  – one-third of students do not complete secondary school
    • many children of migrant workers
  – Spain has lowest % of top scorers in PISA among OECD before Mexico
  – lowest Pisa score in Andalucia
  – neither Catalunia nor Andalucia have institutional policies to help children of immigrants
lack of preparation

• Netherlands: early tracking discriminates against immigrant children
wide differences across countries

Proportion accessing tertiary education

Father with tertiary education

Father with primary education

Holland
Portugal

It goes in cycles, Junior. Sometimes the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Sometimes the rich get richer and the poor stay the same.
message 3

• the main additional barriers at the tertiary level are of two kinds:
  – financial
  – non-financial
rising costs in Southern Arizona

• lowest quintile: net cost of public university up from 59% of family income in 1992 to 73% in 2005 (one of highest proportions in entire nation)

• compared to other US states, Arizona provides very little state financial aid
  – 2009, only $26 per student compared to national average of $549

free is fair

• Canada: average undergraduate tuition fees:
  – in Quebec: $1,862
  – in Ontario: $4,923
University Participation at Age 19 (2003)

- Quebec
- Ontario

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free is fair

- Brazil: University of São Paulo
  - no tuition fees
  - 84% candidates from public high schools
  - 30% of new students
  - in medicine, only 3 out of 180 new entrants
message 4

- non-financial barriers include inadequate information, motivation, academic preparation and social capital

a genius in all of us?
a tale of two chemistry Nobel prize winners (almost...)

Lord Rutherford  Sir Chris Langan

Lord Rutherford

Lord Rutherford
Chris Langan, the most intelligent man in the US

Effects of caste identity on academic performance

message 5

• the most effective equity promotion policies to increase opportunities for disadvantaged students at the tertiary level are those that combine financial aid with measures to overcome non-financial obstacles

financial measures

• well-targeted and well-managed financial aid (scholarships and student loans) can be instrumental in reducing financial barriers to tertiary education
financial aid

• need-based grants
  – unconditional grants, work grants, tuition discounts
• student loans
  – mortgage types, income-contingent loans
financial aid

• Penang (Malaysia): scholarships to increase completion of low income students

• Southern Arizona: targeted financial aid at Pima College and University of Arizona

non-financial measures

• outreach / bridge programs to secondary schools

• reformed selection procedures and/or preferential admission programs

• special institutions and programs targeting underprivileged groups

• retention programs to improve completion rates
outreach / bridge programs to secondary schools

- U of Almeria: “join us in your university” = outreach to children of immigrants in local high schools
- Autonomous University of Barcelona: Ítaca Campus Program
- Victoria U’s Access and Success program

institutions / programs targeting under-privileged groups

- Cochise Community College: largest rural community college in Arizona
  - offering courses on 5 campuses, 5 educational centers and many high schools
- Tohono O’odham Community College: only tribal college in Southern Arizona
professionally-oriented programs

- Chihuahua and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico: CENALTEC institute for high technology training provides alternative tertiary education for applied skills development

- Penang: “school 2 work” and “Fast track” programs prepare young people for employment

retention programs

- University of Texas (El Paso): Collaborative Program for Academic Excellence, to increase retention of progression of minority students
equality of opportunity

The impertinent courtesy of an invitation offered to unwelcome guests, in the certainty that circumstances will prevent them from accepting

Richard Tawney
the equity imperative

- loss of talent
  - Roma children

- social justice
FOOTNOTE

- political stability
- Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Libya, Algeria, …

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