The Engagement of HEIs in Regional Development Opportunities and Challenges

John Goddard
Deputy Vice Chancellor
Professor of Regional Development Studies
Newcastle University, UK

Academic Leader OECD Programme

Objectives of OECD Programme

• Response to multiplicity of initiatives across OECD to mobilise HEIs in support of regional development (HEIs + region)
• Synthesise experience into coherent body of policy and practise to guide HEIs and regional and national governments
• Provide opportunity for dialogue between stakeholders and help with clarification of roles and responsibilities (i.e. assist with capacity building in each country/region)

Valencia September 07

Methodology

• Common framework for regional self-evaluation developed by OECD task group
• Self evaluation report by regional consortium using OECD guidelines
• Site visit by international peer review team (HEI, Regional, National Experts)
• Peer Review Team review team report and response from the region
• Analysis and synthesis by OECD task group drawing upon regional case studies and commissioned review of literature
• Production and dissemination of synthesis report

Participants

• Australia (Sunshine-Fraser Coast)
• Brazil (Northern Paraná)
• Canada (Atlantic Canada)
• Denmark (Jutland-Funen)
• Denmark-Sweden (Öresund)
• Finland (Jyväskylä region)
• Korea (Busan)
• Mexico (State of Nuevo León)
• Netherlands (Twente)
• Norway (Trøndelag, Mid-Norway)
• Spain (autonomous regions of Valencia and Canary Islands)
• Sweden (Värmland)
• UK (the North East of England)
Establishment of City and Regional Partnerships based on Shared Economic Interest

Some agendas/expectations of HE

Widening Participation/access
Sector Skills
Graduate Employability
Employer Engagement and HE Targets
Professional Quals
Life Long Learning
Workforce Development

Economic Growth
Business Competitiveness
Knowledge Transfer
IP exploitation/spinout companies
Regional Development and regeneration

Academic
Research
Teaching

Higher Education Drivers

Education relevant to work
LLL, Sector Skills, professional, employability, workforce education
(Relevance)

Translation of knowledge into innovation
(Application)

World class academic Research base

Academic
Research
Teaching
HEI Regional Interest

• Declining national funding for HE
• Search for local support to assist with global aspirations in research and student recruitment
• Increased local enrolments
• Additional income for services to local businesses through consultancy and CPD
• Indirect benefits of local environment to attract and retain creative academics and motivated students

Regional Drivers

• Post WW2 emphasis on reducing centre/periphery disparities: nationalisation of HE
• 1970s structural adjustment problems in core cities: end of redistributive regional policy
• 1980s emergence of innovation orientated regional policy (innovative milieu: industrial clusters: learning regions)
• 1990s threats and opportunities of globalisation
• Current perspective: widening range of immobile supply side influences where HE has role (tacit knowledge, skills, cultural and social inclusion)

City and Regional Interests in HE

• HE as a major business
• Global gateways for marketing and attracting inward investment
• Generation of new business and sources of advise to established businesses
• Enhancing local human capital through graduate retention and professional updating
• Content and audience for cultural programmes

The Higher Level Conjoint Agenda

• Outward and visible sign of contribution of HE to civil society
• Joining up local and regional government with national interests in science and technology, industrial performance, education and skills, health, social inclusion, culture
University/region value added

The regionally engaged multi-modal and multi-scalar university (after Arbo and Benneworth)

Contribution of Research to Regional Business Innovation

- Creation of new industrial base via spin outs
- Upgrading of products, processes and service of established businesses via consultancy and advisory services
- Diversification of businesses into new sectors via new product development
- Creation of new industries by inward investment attracted by HEI skill base
5 Roles of Universities in Innovation

(National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, UK)

1. Driving forward the research frontier
2. Giving people the skills for innovation
3. Knowledge exchange and people transfer
4. A node in an international network of knowledge
5. Providing regional leadership – specialisation: focusing on strengths and the needs of regions

In Castellon, Valencia, Universidad Jaume I is recognised as a world leader in R&D in the tile industry.

It has helped to transform the region’s traditional industry. The growth is built on technology transfer, spin-offs and upgrading of existing technologies.

Today, Valencia is a global leader in the tiles and ceramics industry.

Source: the Valencia Region SER

Contribution to Skills, the Community and Civil Society

- Knowledge transfer via workplace learning, graduate recruitment, professional development / continuing education
- Students establishing the social relations on which knowledge exchange is built
- Student community action
- Cultural activity and campus development contributing to vibrant places that attract and retain creative people
- The university’s role in local civil society, joining up separate strands of national policy (learning and skills, research and innovation, culture and social inclusion)
In Aalborg University, Denmark, up to 50% of the study work consists of problem-oriented project work: students work in teams to solve problems which have been identified in cooperation with firms, public organisations and other institutions.

At any one time there are 2000-3000 ongoing projects that ensure the university's engagement with the surrounding society.

Source: the Jutland-Funen SER

In Central Finland, Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences has helped to rehabilitate 800 long-term unemployed back to working life with a wide range of physical and social rehabilitation measures, partly delivered through the student training centre.

Source: The Jyväskylä region SER

In the North East of England, the 5 HEIs use sports as a means to widen access to HE, to raise aspirations and to enhance social cohesion within the excluded communities.

Source: the NE England SER

In Mexico, all university students are obliged to do 480 hours community work. Social Service is geared towards addressing the needs of the community.

Source: the Nuevo Leon SER

Good practice and abundance of action...but

Action based on generic growth

A lack of systematic processes and limited co-operation among HEIs and between HEIs and stakeholders

Support for industry/science collaboration with temporary incentives; Focus on research, technology transfer, business-related competitiveness

Limited appreciation of human capital development: “knowledge transfer on legs” e.g. students’ role

Widening access, lifelong learning and equity are emerging issues

Contribution to social, cultural and environmental development often neglected; HEIs role as “good citizens” not often embraced
Barriers to Regional Engagement

Barriers (1): National Systems of HE/S&T Policy
- Lack of a territorial dimension to HE policy
- HE meeting national/international research and education aspirations
- Uncoordinated HE, S&T and territorial policy at national level
- HEIs reinforcing hierarchies of regions
- Neglect of the role of teaching and learning in knowledge transfer and human capital development
- Barriers between levels in HE (e.g. vocational and non vocational HEIs)

Barriers (2): Regional Structures and Governance
- HE not domain of local government
- Fragmented local governments
- Limited regional level powers/authority
- Intra regional competition and urban/rural tensions
- Absence of strong private sector R&D base
- Inchoate SME populations

Barriers (3): Finance
- Third role legislation but not part of core funding
- Teaching funding related to student numbers/graduate output – poorly connected to regional needs
- Research not fully costed – no headroom for investment in translational research capacity
- Intra regional competition for consultancy / CPD
- Short term project based funding from variety of non HE sources (nb EU)
- Metrics – outcomes in non HE domains (e.g. job generation)
Barriers (4): HEI Governance, Leadership and Management

- Limited institutional autonomy to respond to regional opportunities
- No control over key place creating assets (estates)
- Weak internal management in old research intensive HEIs
- Unrelated drivers for T, R and O
- Partnership working confined to senior management and / or isolated entrepreneurial academics
- Intermediate organisations (e.g. science parks, centres for continuing education) detached from academic heartland

Diversity of Missions

A new scenario for HEIs...

- Public Service
- Decreasing Funding

An increasingly complex environment for higher education institutions: Challenges for institutional leaders

- Pressure for Rankings
- What and how to teach?
- Market pressures
- Increased Accountability

A UK Research Intensive University?

- Societal/employer
- Teaching
- Research
- Academic
Pointers for HEIs

- Map the regional and external links; carry out a self-evaluation of institutional capacity to respond to regional needs
- Revisit institutional mission to adopt a wide agenda of regional engagement; monitor results and acknowledge that regional engagement enhance the core missions of teaching and research
- Develop senior management teams, establish a regional development office to mainstream the regional agenda; develop facilitators
- Establish modern administration with HR and financial resources management systems: Review recruitment, hiring and reward systems
- Establish partnership organisations between HEIs

Pointers for governments

- Make regional engagement explicit in HE legislation
- Strengthen institutional autonomy and provide funding incentives (core and incentive based)
- Develop indicators and monitor outcomes
- Require HEI governance to involve regional stakeholders; encourage the participation of HEIs in regional governance
- Support collaboration between HEIs and mobilise resources for joint regional and urban strategies
- Provide a more supportive environment for university-enterprise co-operation
- Focus on human capital development
Continue the Work of Building the Bridge between HEIs and Regions