



BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

OECD Higher Education Programme IMHE General Conference

17-19 September 2012

» Paris



2. What can higher education contribute to developing skills for the knowledge economy?

Providing skills faces the challenge of reconciling immediate demands for greater employability with the longer-term requirements to prepare students to change, adapt and continue learning over their lifecycle. New types of employment replacing outmoded jobs increasingly relies on constant re-skilling and building new capacities.

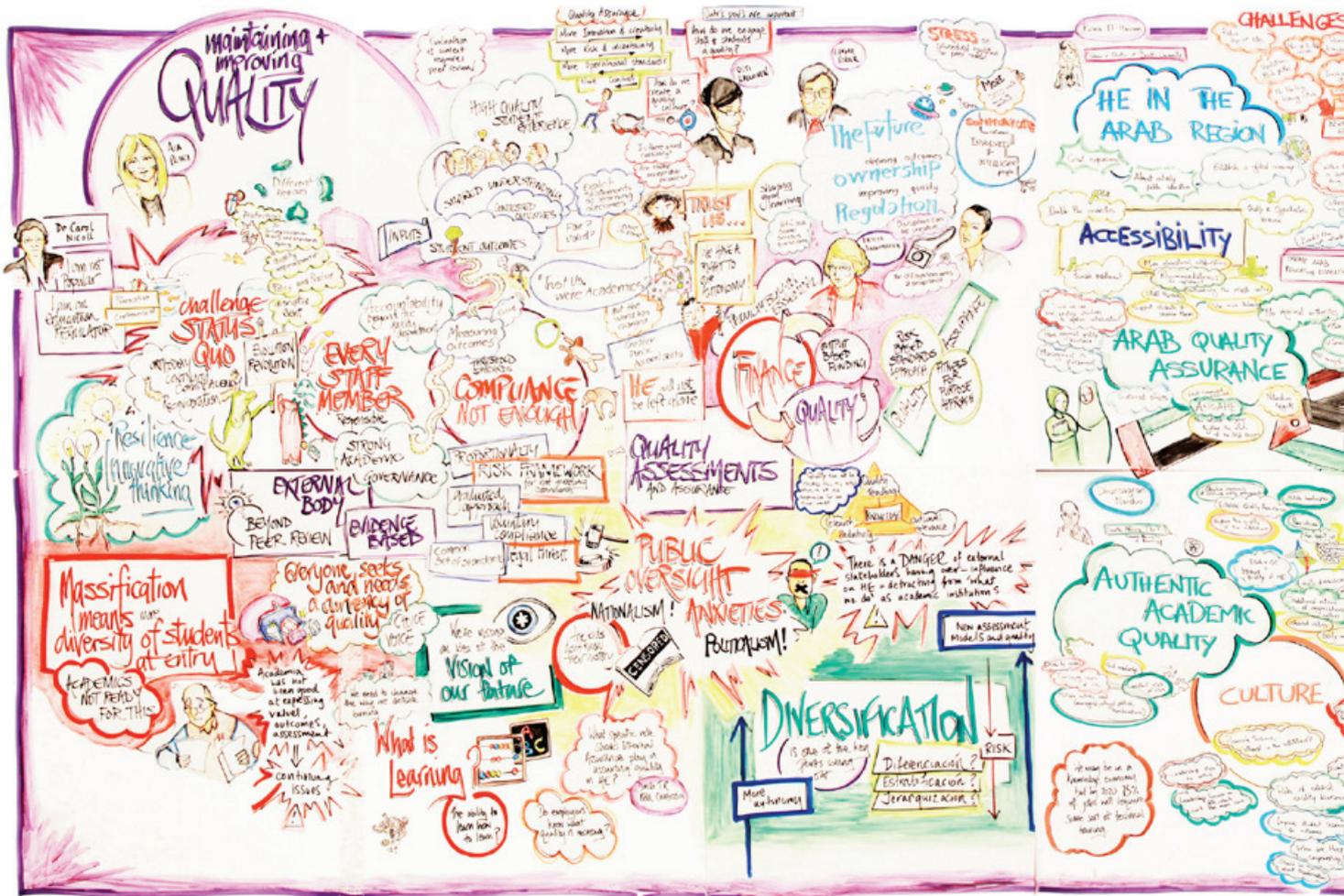
Mass higher education is creating greater economic competition and the cross-border nature of higher education has become much more important, through many different forms of collaboration and competition for mobile students. But there are also barriers to greater internationalisation – migration policies affecting visas for academic staff and students, recognition of foreign credits and degrees, the need for more flexible learning modes.



3. How can higher education reconcile its different missions and roles?

Mass higher education is increasingly expected to fulfill political, economic and social objectives. It is not just about preparing young people for jobs. Higher education can, and should, play a role in promoting peace, democracy, citizenship and social outcomes. Higher education should enable people to think, communicate, develop character, embrace diversity, take a global perspective, handle complexity, develop creativity and be flexible.

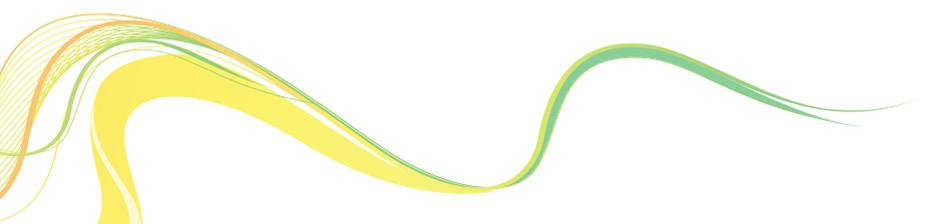
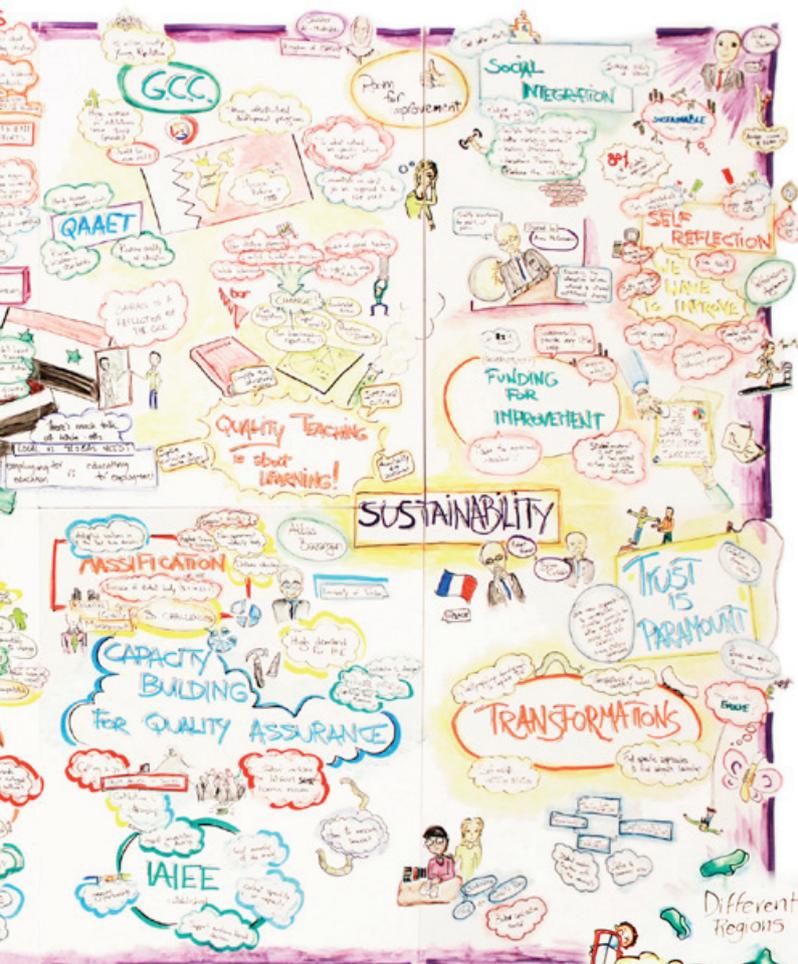
Universities need to nurture talent and pay greater attention to learning effectiveness. Students need to be placed at the centre of higher education and have their voices heard in higher education. At the same time, universities do not have the monopoly on knowledge. Learning takes place as much outside the classroom as within.



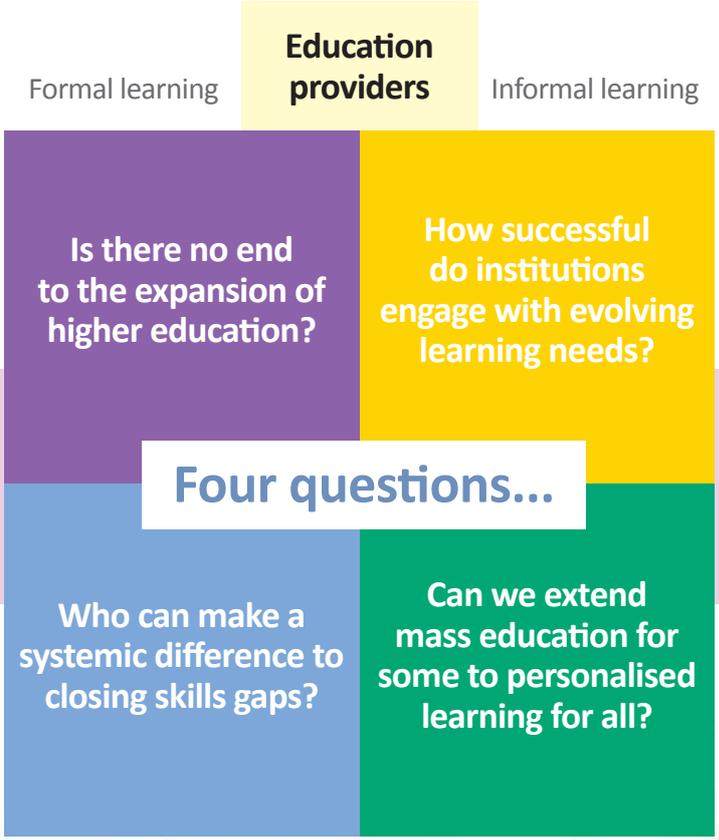
4. How can higher education maintain and improve quality?

Everyone seeks quality, but the definition of quality is not clear-cut. Big questions remain over what is authentic learning, how to foster the ability to learn how to learn and how to create a quality culture within institutions having the full support of faculty. Public oversight can play some role in monitoring quality through regulation, quality assurance and/or funding mechanisms. The labour market can also provide feedback on quality although employers may not agree on what quality they need, either among themselves or with the academic community.

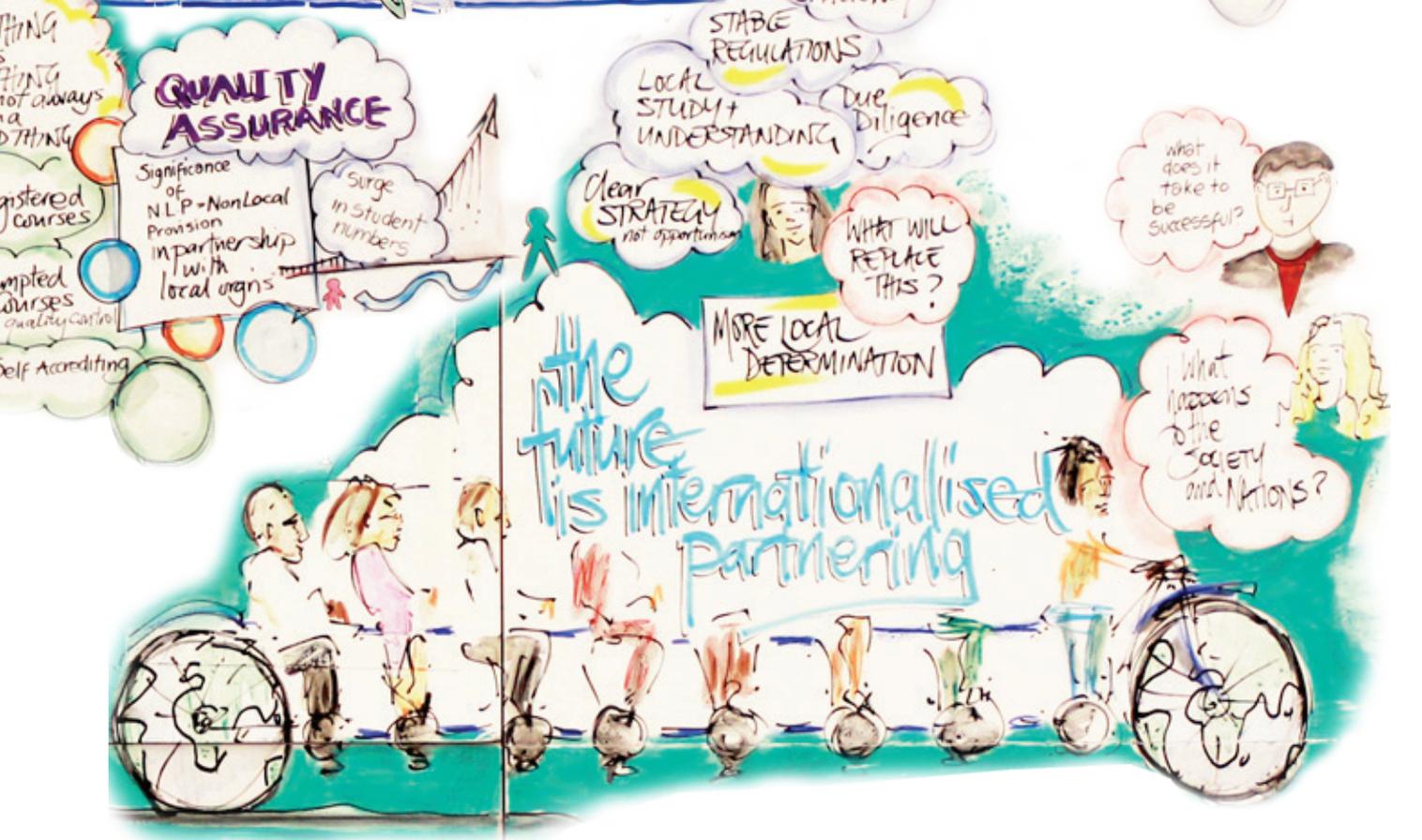
With more people than ever going on to higher education, diversified models make sense. But it is challenging to find the right model for diversification that successfully meets the needs of a wide range of students through different types of institutions while providing quality degrees for all students. At the same time, expanding access to higher education can be undercut by weaknesses in basic education that hold back completion rates in some countries and/or make it difficult to maintain academic standards.



5. What does the future hold for mass higher education?



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6. How can higher education deal with the challenges

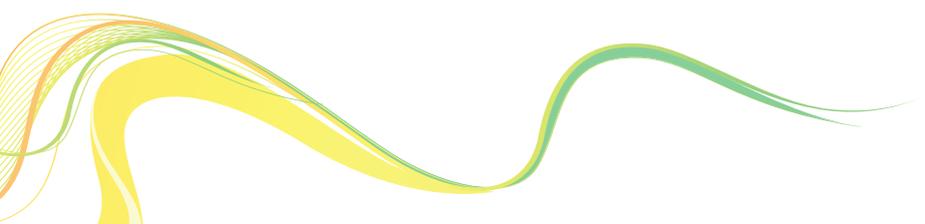
However, high, but unrealistic, **expectations of the benefits** of having access to higher education, especially in emerging and developing countries, may be disappointing and frustrating. But aspiring to climb the social ladder through education is an almost unstoppable force that can also lead to major social upheaval.

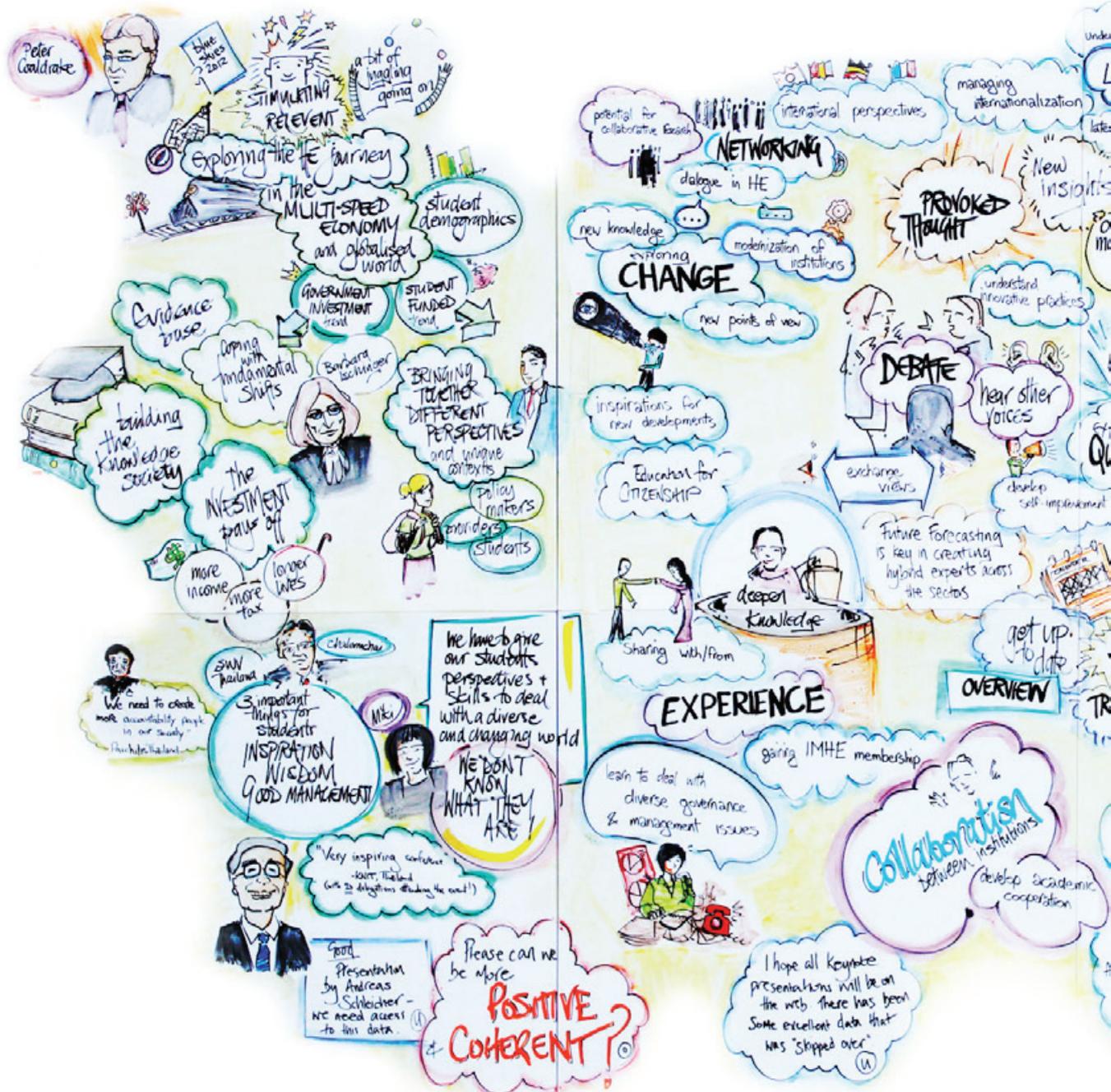
In much of the developed world, sustaining public funding for the mass higher education system and replacing an ageing academic population are reaching a critical point. At the same time, investments in education and research are booming in many rapidly growing economies, notably in Asia. But, even for these countries, as for much of the rest of the developing world, there are major concerns about quality, access and retaining academic capital.

Technology is advancing more rapidly than ever before, opening up a wide range of new opportunities for teaching and learning. This includes greater capacity to individualise learning, to deploy more effective pedagogies, and to improve access by enabling distance learning. While technology would also change cost structures in higher education, it could not be assumed to be a cheaper option.



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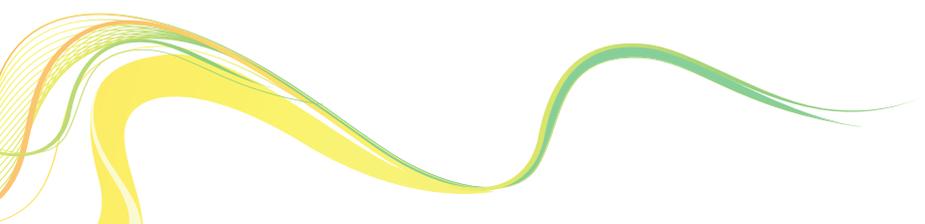


What is the OECD Higher Education Programme (IMHE)?

At this crucial time for higher education, the Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE), relying on the OECD's analytical resources, provides an unrivalled context for strategic thinking and debate, as well as greater awareness and understanding of the role of higher education.



IMHE 2012



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