



***Choices and Responsibilities:  
Higher Education in the Knowledge Society***

**Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE)**

Promoting a lifelong learning society in China  
The attempts by Tsinghua University

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It is generally agreed that the contemporary society has evolved into a knowledge-based society. With more and more challenges and uncertainties, traditional once-for-all education could never satisfy people's demand for upgrading their knowledge and skill in order to adapt themselves to the rapidly changing environment. Lifelong learning has become an effective and necessary way to cope with these problems. It is under this background that China has come to realize the great significance of lifelong learning and firmly embarked on the mission to create a lifelong learning society.

However, because of the uneven development between different areas within China, the uneven distribution of learning resources has been one of the greatest obstacles to realize a learning society in China. As a top university located in the culture and education center of China, Tsinghua University has taken on a multi-dimensional role in the process of eliminating regional unbalance and promoting the lifelong learning society of China. It will be the advocator, the spreader, the thruster, and the executant as well. For years it has given much emphasis on providing education/training service for the common people through opening its door to the society. Moreover, Tsinghua University has assumed a national program "Constructing the theory and practices of lifelong learning system in China" since 2003, which was sponsored by China Ministry of Education. As a part of the program, Tsinghua University has initiated four pilot learning projects covering four mainstream sections of Chinese society, namely learning city, learning countryside, learning community and learning army.

Based on the exploration carried out by Tsinghua university, this paper will demonstrate the implementation and effects of these four pilot projects, which can also be seen as a vivid snapshot of the construction of lifelong learning society in China.