Global Trends in Higher Education

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**Structure of presentation**

- **MEGATRENDS**
  - demographic, environmental, economic, social, technological, political
  - in higher education
  - on higher education

- **IMPACT**
Megatrends: (re) shaping the world

- Demography
- Urbanization
- Inequality
- Climate
- Technology
- Politics
- Individualisation
- Cultures
Purposes of higher education

- Training labour force → learning
- Knowledge creation → research
- Personal development in society (knowledge, skills, citizenship, awareness)

Economic
- Knowledge transfer → innovation
- Knowledge management → organizing

Social – individual

PURPOSES

Social – collective

Impact on trends on WHAT and HOW we educate, research and manage
Megatrends (re) shaping higher education

- New technologies
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Continuing growing demand for higher education
- Shifts in political and economic balances
New technologies

- Everyone always online (5G)
- Immersive technologies (e.g. virtual realities)
- Internet of things
- Robotics and automation
- Artificial Intelligence: algorithms, and human decisions
- Data analytics
- Blockchain
Sustainable Development Goals (1)
Sustainable Development Goals (2)

- SDGs affect education, research and innovation activities
- Education, research and innovation are essential in sustainable development
- SDGs address three broad areas: well-being, environment, economy
- Most evident: SDG 4: ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’
- But other SDGs are connected to education and research agendas as well (health, climate, energy, smart cities, …)
Growing demand for higher education

- Numerical stress on existing higher education
- Widening participation
  - How prepared are new students?
- New suppliers respond to ‘unmet demand’
- New technologies in education to serve more learners
- Training vs. academic formation (‘Bildung’)
  - different responses for different learners
Shifts in political and economic balances

- Trading blocks
  - Affects mobility of students and staff
  - Makes higher education more political
- Rebalancing of economies and markets
  - Rise of new countries – new models for economy & society?
- Populism
  - Affects trust in society’s institutions
- Migration
  - Push: poverty, oppression
  - Pull: need for talent in Global North
- (Religious / racial) conflicts
  - Free speech vs. freedom of faith vs. academic freedom
Overview of global developments around and in higher education

- Diversity & differentiation
- Changing governance
  - Autonomy, accountability and performance
- Competition & Cooperation
- Public and private
- Knowledge, labour markets & economies
- Digitalisation
- Internationalisation, globalization
- Focus on issues
  - Hypes or trends?

The HE world according to CHEPS 😃
In pursuit of diversity

**Diversity at three levels**

- Different sectors: universities, colleges, specialized institutions, public and/or private institutions, ...
- Differences between institutions: ‘profiling’, ‘branding’, ‘uniqueness’, ...
- Differences within institutions: types and levels of degrees, students, educational formats, ...
Governance at system level

- More institutional autonomy
  - Strategic actorhood, empowered institutional leadership

- Stronger accountability
  - How is taxpayers’ money, or tuition fees, used? What quality do stakeholders get?

- Steering more based on performance
  - Contracts, output funding, rankings, benchmarks, naming and shaming, …
  - Increasingly indicator driven

- Changing role of government
  - Setting national agenda, setting frameworks, regulating access, correcting imperfect markets, pushing new technologies

- Increasing austerity
  - Need for more private investments in education and research
Increased competition

• ... for brains: students, staff and (top) managers
  o Excellent students, top researchers and top leaders
  o Aging → scarcity → competition
  o Internationalisation, mobility

• ... for reputation: rankings and league tables

• ... for funding
  o Public budgets: competition, or particular conditions
  o Larger share of other funding (European Union, industry)

• ... for market share
  o New providers of education, (applied) research
  o (virtual) campuses of foreign universities
More cooperation (1)

- Between institutions
  - To achieve goals you cannot reach by yourself: improved services, reputation, save money, ...
  - From temporary strategic alliances, networks, consortia to mergers
  - Public–private partnerships, encouraged by governments, and long-term contract research with companies
  - Contribute to strong regions: science parks, ‘smart cities’, ‘regional hubs’
More cooperation (2)

- **Within institutions**
  - Academics increasingly work in teams, cross-disciplinary, in international consortia and networks
  - Sharing (research) infrastructures
  - More joint degrees (including PhDs, research schools)

- **With stakeholders**
  - Science service units: academic workplaces where academics, students and industry work together
  - Lifelong learners – collaboration with industry
Public and private

- Shift from ‘public versus private’ to ‘public and private’
- Collaboration between public and private providers / partners
- Opening systems of higher education to new providers
  - Private, new business models
- ‘Privatisation’ and ‘commercialisation’ of university activities
  - Patents, licenses, shareholder in spin offs,
  - Contract education, continuing professional education
  - Outsourcing administration and services, …
- Public funding is limited → substitution from private sources
  - Tuition fees, third party research, crowd funding, alumni, private donors, …
Digitalisation

Education
- Flexibility
- Content
- Didactics
- Assessment
- ‘e-mentoring’

Research
- New technologies
- New areas
- New dissemination: pre-prints, open access, open data

Management
- Standardisation
- Learning analytics
- Information systems
- Focused marketing
- Improved student choice (‘e-advisor’)

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Knowledge, Labour Markets and the Economy

- Instrumental view on knowledge
  - University as the engine for the economy

- Human Capital
  - Growing need for highly educated / trained people (shift in labour markets)

- New professions
  - Knowledge becomes outdated rapidly → How to educate for professions that are not known today?

- 21st century skills
  - social intelligence, creativity, ability to adapt, innovation, entrepreneurialism, digital competences
Focus on issues: Hypes or lasting trend?

- Issues arise and higher education institutions are expected to respond
  - Zigzagging hypes or long-lasting reorientation of teaching & learning, research, management?
    - e.g.
      - Socio-economic inequalities within and across countries
      - Demographics: declining regions, urbanization, aging populations, migration,…
      - Grand societal challenges: Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, …
      - Internationalisation – globalisation – slow-balisation and rise of regional blocks (Europe, America, Asia, China, …)
In conclusion

1. Higher education institutions gain different tasks that are not always easy to reconcile
   - Mission stretch, risk of mission overload
2. Expectations on higher education institutions are sky-high
3. Higher education institutions operate in a highly volatile environment