

EDITORIAL

The collected papers appearing here are from the Third International Symposium on the Role of Universities in Developing Areas, which was held in Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal, in July 1993. The International Network on the Role of Universities in Developing Areas (INRUDA) sponsored the event in cooperation with the University of the Azores, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and Ben Gurion University of the Negev. More than 60 scholars from 20 nations participated.

The papers here are among the most interesting and diverse of the presentations at the symposium. The first section contains the opening remarks of António Manuel Bettencourt Machado Pires, President of the University of the Azores, and the keynote address by David S. Saxon, President Emeritus of the University of California. Professor Pires focuses his remarks on his own university and its role in developing the Azore Islands. He sees the university as the 'great mediator with the vast and complex world of modern science'. The handicaps he cites confront many new universities in remote areas: the 'risk of disintegration or lack of coordination among [several small] campuses; financial problems; lack of human resources; and unevenness in growth and quality'. He notes that, 'There is no growth without crises and transitions, no life without discontentment and struggle.'

In his keynote address, Professor Saxon addresses the role of universities in the underdeveloped countries of the former Soviet Union, which he refers to as the 'Second World'. The role that universities can and should play in the historic transformation now under way remains to be spelled out. He reports on the history and goals of the newly established American University of Armenia, and asks to what degree this model can be replicated in other countries. While cautious, he believes that new institutions, supported by developed nations and diaspora communities, can help transform Second World countries.

Section II contains two papers dealing with different aspects of community development. In the first, Osman Galal discusses how lessons learned from the developing world are disseminated among students and community-health providers at the UCLA School of Public Health. The school wants to improve the provision of health services and care to the diverse ethnic communities of the city. It provides a research and teaching forum for public-health workers to adapt lessons from the developing countries to the needs of the very diverse, multi-ethnic population of greater Los Angeles. In the second paper, Pieter M. Kachelhoffer reports on education needs in the newly transformed South Africa. He believes the new nation lacks the resources to provide universal quality education for all. He proposes a strategy that calls for universities to improve the educational opportunities of the masses of black South Africans.

Section III contains two papers about the experience of the University of the Azores, being situated on remote islands in the Atlantic Ocean. In the first, Luis M. Vieira de Andrade reviews the University's efforts to establish a Center for International and Strategic Studies. Based on the past role the Azores played as a geographical link between Europe and North America, it has held conferences on subjects of vital importance to the nations of both continents. The second paper, by Ricardo Serrão Santos, João Gonçalves and Eduardo Isidro, focuses on applied research in conservation of marine-living resources. In the age of greater awareness of the need to protect fish and shellfish, the small university plays a major role in studying the problems and defining solutions that allow for sustainable development of the resources of the environment. The authors also provide an overview of current threats and future management strategies for conservation and exploration. They show the value of basic marine ecological, systematic and biogeographic research that a small department can conduct.

Section IV provides two very different studies about professional training and development from scholars in India and Australia. In the first, N. Jayaram examines the training of health personnel in India to address the interface between professional training and national development. He shows that socio-cultural and politico-economic factors influence the background, calibre and orientation of medical personnel, as well as the nature and extent of medical care available to the masses. He discusses such issues as élitist bias, dilution of quality, brain drain and the crisis in medical coverage. The second paper, by Don S. Mansell, shows the potential role engineers can play in development. He reports on a unique engineering curriculum at the University of Melbourne that addresses development matters explicitly in the 'technical disciplines'. The research component of the programme requires the students to concern themselves with development implications in their own countries of origin.

Section V presents two papers on research institutes and development. In the first, Josef Blahoz of the Czech Republic calls on universities and research institutes to help create cultural, political, legal and social prerequisites and an environment favourable for the implementation of basic rights and freedoms in newly democratic regimes who, while committed to democracy, have serious socio-economic problems and a population which has lived until very recently in non-democratic regimes. He proposes a model of university-level research and civic education aimed at the creation of a democratic environment adequate to internal

acceptance of fundamental human rights by the citizens. The second paper, by Luis Alfaro Cardoso, proposes a model for mutual cooperative agrarian research between European and developing countries, which prevents exploitation by the more developed countries. For the developing areas, this relationship requires building research programmes closely related to problems concerning agrarian production, and which reinforce their own academic institutions. Research and development projects should always take into consideration the social and economic conditions existing in the developing countries. In Cardoso's view, developing countries can learn a great deal from the research conducted by European countries in their former colonies in Africa.

Section VI on 'Higher Education Policy and National Development' contains four diverse case studies. Tony Adams presents a paper dealing with efforts by Australian universities to attain a more 'international perspective'. He traces both the efforts to ensure that Australian academics have a world view and also the efforts to attract more international students, which gave way in the 1980s to a more commercial-export approach to foreign students. At present, there is a re-evaluation of the role Australia should play in countries of the region. Adams suggests a way of balancing the internationalization of education.

Mariano Alves reviews the main educational changes in Portugal's higher education system in recent decades, during which the political regime changed from a dictatorship to a democracy that now emphasizes the European Union. His focus is on the close relationship between ideology and educational policy. In his paper on higher education and national development, Joseph S. Szyliowicz argues that significant problems in the higher education system hinder the universities' contribution to national development. This is often the case in many countries far along in development. Special reference is made to the period following the 1980 revolution in Turkey. The final paper, by David J. Thomas, examines the association between levels of higher education and economic development. He concludes that to the extent that universities are publicly funded with scarce resources, their most efficient contribution to developing regions appears to be overwhelmingly in supporting quality, universal education at the general level and, to a lesser extent, education for the professions.

The 14 papers indeed cover a very wide spectrum of subjects and concerns. This is not surprising when considering the work of universities and the comprehensive issues related to development – either in developing countries, or in geographic areas or segments of the population of developed countries. Continuing research, analysis and examination of policies are needed and are being pursued. Many of these will be the subject of papers and discussions at the Fourth International Symposium on the Role of Universities in Developing Areas to take place in Melbourne, Australia, during July 11–14, 1995. Further information can be obtained from Ms Dora Panayotides, Conference Manager, at e-mail INRUDA@RMIT.EDU.AU or fax 61-3-660-3786.

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