

# **Fileting the TNE Steak**

## **Transnational Education (TNE) From a recipient's perspective**

### **What is cooking?**

Altruism?

Cultural Hegemony?

Profit?

Dumping?

### **Why is it sizzling?**

The 'education deficit' – capacity, funding, skills, quality, diversity, 'globalization, 'life-long learning';

Tradability, as assisted by technology and economy of scale; multi-mode operation possible;

Breaking down of language barriers, cultural enrichment;

Government initiatives/promotional efforts by the exporters

Spin-off from the trade negotiations or other inter-governmental agreements for stronger political ties (Regional pacts, MoU's on culture or education, etc)

### **Where are the bones?**

Victimization - consumers need protection

Education a national prerogative - ideological, planning and control considerations

The displacement effect – universities are essential institutions, the need for whole person education, a national identity, 'no taking the smooth with the rough', etc.

### **How to removing them?**

- mandated entry barriers (quotas, partnership/twinning requirements or beneficial ownership thresholds)
- registration or licensing schemes
- administrative selection in a developmental perspective, i.e. going for the top end.

### **Are there softer alternatives or complementary measures?**

If quality is the main concern as most importing countries would claim to be the case, QA systems exist in many places. Many of them government-run or government-sanctioned. High level of international cooperation is assured through INQAAHE and the regional networks. Increasing awareness and contributions by international organizations, but:

- the asymmetry of interests;
- QA agencies are not everywhere and where there are, they might be at different stages of development;
- a gulf between QA agencies and their own governments (e.g. OECD/UNESCO Guidelines not achieving full potential without Government acceptance or backing)
- international processes not connected up (UNESCO/OECD not yet working with the WTO)
- QA not having an impact on the WTO negotiations
- 'Education' not driving the trade in education services negotiations

### **What can INQAAHE and INQAAHE Members do?**

- let our existence and our ability to contribute be known, especially in the area of trust or confidence building;
- talk to the policy-makers and get an acknowledgement of the UNESCO/OECD guidelines;

- UNESCO/OECD/INQAAHE and others to engineer putting the UNESCO/OECD guidelines onto the negotiating table (as WIPO did in the TRIPS negotiations);
- Work to the Guidelines; promote and develop them through practice;
- Give true meaning to the 'as good as' rule;
- build an international platform for information sharing, consultations and gradual mutual recognition;
- improve our own regimes and win community support (transparency of operation, sharing of information/best practices, action against dubious advertisement/agencies, use of annual returns/periodic audit to maintain and upgrade standards, mutual agreements/arrangements to facilitate audit from overseas sources, encourage joint audits or interchange of experts and consultants, etc)

Different countries have different definitions of a good steak. The UNESCO/OECD Guidelines and the two presentations before mine provide an appropriate backdrop for a frank discussion. Let's explore the issue further and see whether we do have a steak that can be enjoyed by everybody, provided that the bones are removed. Based on the Hong Kong experience, my contention is that there is such a steak and there are ways to fillet it; especially with a high level of international cooperation. Over to you and thank you.

**Ends**

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