Governance and Adaptation to Innovative Modes of Higher Education Provision (GAIHE)

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Abstract. The Governance and Adaptation to Innovative Modes of Higher Education Provision (GAIHE) project tackles one main area for reforms of the EU2020 strategy, namely to create effective governance mechanisms in support of excellence. The emergence of these new modes of provision has sparked a strong debate about how to maintain the quality of higher education worldwide. As such, this project ties in with the European Commission’s objectives to enhance the quality of higher education in an environment where globalisation and the attractiveness of the European higher education area need to be reinforced (Europa 2010, 34).

Introduction

Project aims to support HEIs in their understanding of innovations in available modes of provision and managerial models, and promote innovation in higher education, while launching a debate regarding the balance between innovation and quality.

The project addresses several objectives:

- A general objective of the project is to encourage the best use of results, innovative products and processes and the exchange of good practice in the fields covered by the Lifelong Learning
- A specific objective is to showcase examples of adaptation to innovative forms of provision according to the understanding that our consortium has developed.
- The operational objectives are to enhance the development of innovative practices in education and training at the tertiary level, and their transfer, via the identification of promising practices and subsequent dissemination.

In doing so, the project fosters multilateral co-operation between HEIs in Europe, providing a platform for mutual learning and furthering the understanding of new modes of provision, including several higher education institution partnerships (e.g. in hubs or branch campuses).

Key Questions

Specifically, the GAIHE project seeks to answer a number of key questions:

1. What changes have been made in the higher education provision landscape to challenge the ‘traditional’ model of HEIs?
2. What is the role of the HEI governance structure and day-to-day management processes in establishing and regulating innovative modes of provision?
3. What are these new (innovative) modes of HE provision across Europe?
4. How does the management of HEIs adapt (in support or in reaction) to these innovations across Europe?
5. What are the main drivers and barriers for innovative higher education provision?

How do we Define Innovation?

Project assumes a positive normative value to innovation, and therefore, in-line with the OECD’s Oslo Manual (OECD, 2005), operationalises innovation as an implemented change with an increased
added value, replacing an existing product or production method. Discussions surrounding the added-value aspect of innovation raises important question regarding the beneficiary of this added-value (for example, added-value for all HEI students or for a sub-set of students such as distance learners or under-represented learners), as well as regarding the measure of this added-value (for example, in terms of better learning outcomes, better performance of HEIs on specific indicators, better societies). Innovation can be of various types, including a process which brings together various novel ideas in a way that impacts society, a new product or service, a new technology, a new idea, etc.

Furthermore, the GAIHE project conceives of innovation in a context-specific manner, as a new process, structure or initiative which creates a value-added for the HEI in which it is implemented. In other words, an initiative in one HEI might be common practice and is thus not considered innovative, while if introduced in another HEI, might bring about change and added-value and thus represent innovation in that particular context.

Finally, while innovation can be applied to a wide range of contexts in higher education, this project focuses specifically on innovations related to the modes of higher education provision, as well as to the governance and management of higher education institutions.

Figure 1 illustrate the spheres of innovation in higher education which are the focus of the GAIHE project.

Figure 1. Spheres of innovation in higher education.

Innovation in Modes of Higher Education Provision

The dark sections in “Education provision” refers to the manner in which education is provided rather than to its content. It can thus refer to pedagogical approaches (or curriculum delivery), administrative aspects of provision (or programme organisation), or the integration of technology, but not to curricular innovations or the examination of HEIs’ involvement in innovation through scientific research and development. Generally, these refer to changes in (1) how learning takes place, (2) the learning environment and (3) how those two are organised through institutions and policies. Chapter 3 outlines examples of innovations in modes of higher education provision in more detail while Figure 2-2 provides some illustrative examples of the three categories of innovation in education provision.

Source: GAIHE
The process of innovation can take place in a *top down* fashion (from institutions to individuals) or in a *bottom up* fashion (from individuals to institution) (Olsen, 2007) and is influenced by three levels of actors (macro, meso and micro) (Fullan, 1994; Olsen, 2007). Macro level actors include governments and international institutions (e.g., European Union, OECD), meso level actors represent collaborations between HEIs and regional or local institutions, and micro level actors are within higher education institutions faculties and departments (Figure 2-3). This report addresses both top-down and bottom-up innovative processes and examines the role and influence of all three levels of actors.

**Innovation in Governance and Management of HEIs**

One main focus of this project is ways in which HEIs adjust their institutional structures (governance) and day-to-day management processes from those characterising more traditional universities (strong core with independent faculties, geographical boundaries, and in Europe a priori governmental steering) to structures which challenge their borders, organisational layouts and relationships to government. Some of the oldest universities in Europe such as University of Bologna or Sorbonne University would exemplify the former, more traditional model while the University of London which franchises degrees in India or the University of Liverpool which uses online teachers based anywhere in the world exemplify the latter.

Two main overarching concepts encompass a wide range of innovation in governance and management of HEIs, namely, *entrepreneurial university* and *distributed leadership* (. The former revolves around the ideas of tightening relationships with the private sector (university-business cooperation), promoting universities as innovation hubs, emphasising the role of universities in economic growth as well as issues surrounding the internationalisation of higher education and many more. The latter, which is to an extent a prerequisite for the successful implementation of entrepreneurship, underlines the need for the diffusion of responsibilities and control within the institutions
Figure 3. Some key features associated with entrepreneurial universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership in HEIs Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Devolution of financial and administrative authority to HEI departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>Negotiating the division of responsibilities between HEI leadership roles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>The appointment of people from outside the HEI to bring in new skills, knowledge and contacts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incremental</td>
<td>Progressive opportunities for experience and responsibility such as sitting on and chairing committees; leading modules, programmes and projects; serving as a deputy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunistic</td>
<td>People willingly taking on additional responsibilities within and outside the HEI (e.g. sitting on academic, professional and/or editorial boards; consulting and liaising with business and policy makers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Leadership is assumed and shared organically such as in the development of a collaborative research bid.</td>
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Source: GAIHE

Table 2-1. Classification of distributed.

Source: GAIHE

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References


