

universities as leading institutions in pursuing all-around excellence. The second subproject selects and funds 65 research centers at 24 institutions to develop as areas of excellence.

The government awarded NT\$17.37 billion (approximately US\$565 million) for the first year of the project, with 65 percent (NT\$11.37 billion or US\$370 million) allocated to enhance social responsibility, and 35 percent (NT\$6 billion or US\$195 million) to enhance global competitiveness. In this funding model, university social responsibility (strengthening university–industry collaboration; fostering cooperation among universities and schools; involving ministries and local governments in university-led projects; and nurturing talents required by local economies) has become a new key performance indicator used to monitor the performance of universities.

The adoption of this new indicator optimistically aims for a return of a local focus among faculty, who are expected to work closely with communities, industry, and government organizations as an alternative to seeking to compete globally by publishing in international journals. This initiative also marks a shift from an outward-looking strategy to a relatively inward-looking approach. Importantly, this reorientation exemplifies the tension between the global and local agendas in higher education policy.

POLITICS MATTERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

This reorientation, following the Taiwanese election cycle, suggests the relevance of local politics for higher education policy making. In the new interplay between educational autonomy and performance culture, it is clear that political circumstances have substantially affected Taiwan's higher education policy. The island's democratic transition has played an important role in motivating various sectors (including industry and municipal authorities) to participate in higher education governance. It has resulted in a decentralized framework of governance, in which individual higher education institutions exercise increased autonomy, demonstrating the responsiveness and accountability of higher education policy to society.

Based on this evolution, we may consider the reorientation as an attempt to balance external/global trends and requirements (as revealed by the world-class trend) and internal/local pressures. To put it another way, there is a zero-sum relationship between the global and local perspectives on higher education policy. This not only justifies the shift toward an inward-looking approach, but also suggests that policy-making processes in higher education are inevitably local because of politically bound views and realities. In this regard, the controversies about world-class university and the call for university social responsibility should be framed

in ways that incorporate political responsiveness and the potential for a blended approach to global and local needs. ■

Higher Education Reform in Moldova: Achievements and Challenges

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The higher education system in the Republic of Moldova has undergone a far-reaching transformation since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. This article analyzes some of the main achievements and challenges of the higher education reform in that Eastern European country, which joined the Bologna process in 2005.

THE "DILEMMA OF SIMULTANEITY"

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the newly independent Republic of Moldova went through severe crises and had to adjust to a swiftly changing political and socioeconomic environment. The small landlocked state between Romania and Ukraine faced what political scientist Claus Offe once described as a "dilemma of simultaneity," as the country was confronted with multiple transformational challenges at the same time. As an independent state, Moldova had first to establish a new political system and a framework of political institutions. The former Soviet republic then embarked on a transition from a command economy to a market economy and faced economic crises. Last but not least, Moldova had to cope with a secessionist conflict in the region Transnistria, which culminated in a brief war in 1992 and remains unresolved to date.

All these developments had important repercussions on the higher education system in Moldova, which had been designed and shaped by Soviet higher education policies. The impact of the new political and socioeconomic environment on higher education was twofold. On the one hand, political decision-makers and higher education institutions (HEIs) had to deal with new requirements from the economy and from society. For example, demands for new subject areas (e.g., in the social sciences) and a changing labor market created a need for education reform. On the other hand, the political and economic environment created obstacles for the actual implementation of reforms. For instance, state budget shortages caused pressure on higher education funding streams and frequent government changes resulted in policy uncertainty.

MOLDOVA AND THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

In this complex environment, European higher education models emerged as important reference points, in particular when Moldova was included in the Bologna process in 2005. According to scholar Lucia Padure, the Bologna process at that time was seen by some stakeholders as “an opportunity to fully break with the Soviet system of HE and modernize HE in terms of methods of instruction, content of curricula, quality improvement, and greater mobility of students within a larger European context.” On a formal and structural level, Moldova made considerable progress in implementing Bologna reforms: a three-cycle system (bachelor, master, PhD) was implemented in most areas of study and the “European Credit Transfer System” (ECTS) as well as the “Diploma Supplement” were introduced. Moreover, steps to develop a new framework for quality assurance were undertaken.

Higher education reforms—including the implementation of the Bologna Process—were also supported by the European Union through funding schemes like Tempus and Erasmus+. These programs bring together international consortia of HEIs and related stakeholders to promote the reform of HEIs and higher education systems. For Moldova, 83 Tempus projects (1994–2013) and 11 Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education projects (2015–2017) were selected for funding. Moreover, Moldovan HEIs participate in several Erasmus+ mobility projects for students and staff (2015–2017: 1303 mobilities). All of these projects have contributed to the internationalization of higher education in Moldova and promoted the integration of HEIs in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). However, the actual degree of internationalization of Moldovan HEIs remains uneven.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

An analysis of the current state of the Moldovan higher education system also reveals substantial challenges. Studies show that the labor market relevance of higher education is often lacking. For example, a recent World Bank report published in 2018 found “strong indications that higher education lacks responsiveness to current labor demand, let alone to the skill demand of the future.” According to the World Bank, “nearly half of Moldovan firms face systematic problems in finding staff with the right skills.” Likewise, a survey conducted by the Erasmus+ Capacity Building Project “Reforming Master Programmes in Finance in Armenia and Moldova” (REFINE) indicated a need for more relevance to practice in study programs and an update of didactical approaches.

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The higher education system of Moldova also faces a fundamental demographic obstacle: according to the National Bureau of Statistics, student numbers decreased from 127,997 in the academic year 2006–2007 to 74,726 in 2016–2017. This downward trend is caused by a declining birth rate and substantial emigration from Moldova. Forecasts indicate a further decline of the student population in the coming years, which raises fundamental questions about the future and sustainability of a relatively large tertiary sector.

The higher education system has increased considerably in size during the post-Soviet period and comprised 29 HEIs in the academic year 2017–2018 as compared to nine HEIs in 1988. This development is the result of an increasing liberalization and differentiation of higher education after independence: a number of new state HEIs were founded and private providers were allowed to enter the tertiary sector. A peak was reached in the year 2000 with a total of 47 HEIs, but not all of these institutions were able to consolidate their position in the higher education system. Several private HEIs disappeared again from the higher education landscape and the overall number of institutions has gradually stabilized in the past decade.

PRESSURE FOR FUTURE REFORMS

In conclusion, despite a challenging political and socioeconomic environment, some important steps for higher education reform have been taken. The Bologna process has become an important reference point, as Moldova aims to integrate further into the EHEA. The structural reforms that have been implemented have enhanced the international comparability as well as compatibility of the Moldovan higher education system and provided a foundation to enhance internationalization. However, while formal and structural changes have been made, challenges remain.

One of the most pressing issues for the Moldovan higher education system is undoubtedly the nation's demographic development: the declining student population makes it clear that a reorganization of the large higher education system is required in order to ensure its sustainability. Under these circumstances, increasing competition between HEIs appears likely. Investments into enhanced quality and relevance of higher education can strengthen the position of HEIs and thus their ability to survive the coming changes. However, it cannot be excluded that some HEIs will disappear from the higher education landscape in this process. ■

Evaluating Institutional Grants at African Universities

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Since Africa's earliest modern public universities were established on the continent in the 1940s, these institutions have struggled to generate adequate and sustainable funding. They depend mainly on subventions from national governments, grants, donations from the international donor community, and cooperation with industry to fund their learning, teaching, and research activities.

The new missions of African universities—coping with massification, becoming research intensive, and attaining world-class status—require tremendous amounts of funding. Most African governments have chosen to give their public universities autonomy to secure foreign grants from national governments, universities in developed countries, the international donor community (in particular, the World Bank), and philanthropic organizations (e.g., the Gates and Templeton Foundations). To give a few examples, in 2015–2016, the Office of Research and Development at the University of Ghana received US\$32 million from nine international donor agencies. In 2010, the website of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria revealed that the university had 106 grants (101 from international donors), for an amount of over US\$17 million. At the University of Nai-

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robi in Kenya, only one of the 16 donors mentioned on the university's website is local. In 2016–2017, the government of South Africa earmarked US\$46 million as Teaching Development Grants (TDG) for universities to improve their teaching, and US\$14.8 million as Research Development Grants (RDG) to improve their research. Most recently, the University Capacity Development Grant (2018–2020) seeks to address the issue of inequality and promote the recruitment of black academics into the South African higher education system.

LIMITED CAPACITY FOR EVALUATION

While international donors have systems to evaluate the use and impact of their grants, the internal self-assessment mechanisms of African universities generally do not monitor the use of external grants. In the past 15 years, many of the continent's universities have established grant offices whose role is to develop strategies and attract external funding. However, in most cases, these offices do not have clear grant policies to guide their operations or the use of funding received by the institution. This lack of policies prevents universities from properly evaluating the impact of externally funded programs, which in turn limits their ability to determine whether these programs are actually of benefit