

## **Access to Higher Education, *Task Force Meeting***

15 –16 September, 2006, Porto

### **RESPONSES TO INITIAL ACCESS QUESTIONS**

#### ***Dr. Jacqueline King (USA)***

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**1. In your country/region and/or institution, what is the most critical access issue for higher education institutions?**

In the U.S., the most critical issue is increasing participation for low-income students, African-Americans, and Hispanics. It is generally agreed that this can only be done through a combination of improved academic preparation, need-based financial aid (combined with restrained growth in tuition fees), better information resources for parents and students, and school/family/community support to students. How best to structure initiatives that address these four areas and how to pay for them are the most significant policy debates, but there is general agreement that access is predicated on academic preparation, financial resources, information, and student support.

In the U.S., distance education is seen as especially valuable to working adult students, some of whom may be low-income, but it is generally not viewed as a solution to the access problem.

**2. Have there been major policy reforms, government programs and/or major research initiatives or specific strategies to address access related issues in your country and region? Please identify further sources of information and bibliographic resources that may be of interest to IAU.**

The U.S. has been working on the access problem since the mid-1960's, with spending primarily concentrated on student financial aid and—to a more limited extent—aid to elementary-secondary schools in low-income areas. Despite these significant investments, inequities in access still remain. Since 2001, federal government interest in the access issue has been minimal, and funding for federal financial aid has stagnated. Some states have continued to expand their need-based grant programs, but many others have created merit-based aid programs that have the benefit of being easy to explain (minimizing the information problem) but focus resources on students who would have gone to college regardless.

There is more creativity and energy in the private sector, where a number of major efforts are underway, including the Pathways to College network ([www.pathwaystocollege.net](http://www.pathwaystocollege.net)), the American Diploma Project ([www.achieve.org](http://www.achieve.org)), and the National College Access Network ([www.collegeaccess.org](http://www.collegeaccess.org)). Finally, some individual universities or university systems are doing important work. Most noteworthy are the outreach efforts of the California State University (see these *InsideHigherEd.com* articles: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2006/06/26/intro>, <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2006/06/27/latino>,

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2006/06/28/black>,  
<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2006/06/29/asians>, ).

- 3. Higher education funding is a related, but an equally vast topic. How can we best link access and funding in a useful and feasible manner in our deliberations? Are there other public policy issues that are of direct importance to the access discussion?**

Even if we determine that institutional finance and tuition fees are outside the scope of this project, we should still discuss student financial aid. Even when tuition is free, finances are a barrier to low-income students who must give up earnings from work and support their living expenses while enrolled.

I think it might also be useful to address learner productivity and institutional capacity. How can institutions build capacity without a lot of new money for faculty salaries or buildings?

- 4. Are there any ‘universal’ values or principles that should underpin access policy in all regions and that might be helpful for all IAU members as they develop or advocate access policies and initiatives?**

I’m not sure what might be needed here, but I’d encourage the group to think about the importance of second chances – especially for students who may have attended sub-standard schools or had family concerns that made it difficult for them to achieve in school. What happens when you sit for an exam at age 17 should not, I believe, fix the level of opportunity you can expect for the rest of your life.

- 5. Is there a place or need for an international discussion to stimulate, inform, and improve policies and initiatives that increase and broaden access to higher education? If so, who should be engaged in such a discussion?**

It seems to me that there is a huge need for international discussions that prompt creative responses to this problem. Discussions should involve government policy makers, university leaders, secondary school leaders, faculty, students, business leaders, and leaders of NGO’s.

## **Introduction**

The British government continues to have a target of 50% participation of young people aged 18 – 30 in HE by 2012. The current figure of around 43% in England has proved difficult to increase. Participation rates reach 48% across the whole of the UK compared with 53% for Europe.

The Open University UK, has well established strategic priorities one of which is to *promote fair access to all*. It is vital in our core purpose that we continue actively to encourage and support the successful participation of all those who wish to take up opportunities for higher education, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds or from under-represented groups. There is also a Widening Participation Strategy (2006-09) with an associated action plan.

### **1. In your country/region and/or institution, what is the most critical access issue for higher education institutions?**

Breaking down barriers that put off non-traditional learners has to be the most critical issue in the UK. The barriers are often very real (financial, social, geographical etc.) but occasionally these live in the perception of potential students from under-represented groups. We know that those with traditional HE entry requirements do progress to HE. Significantly less of those with few or no entry requirements enter HE. Reaching the hard to reach is therefore a major pre-occupation.

In the OU context, being open entry presents additional challenges as this requires us to explore how we might adapt our supported open learning model to target those most in need. With increasing migrant populations we find English language and literacy becoming specific examples of needs requiring support. The huge diversity of the existing and potential OU community remains an issue for curriculum developers as well as those who recruit and support students.

Those who are harder to reach who come to us require significant amounts of support – and this isn't always necessarily academic support. We find that students in receipt of financial assistance are much harder to retain. Our supported open learning methods need to be augmented in order to reduce drop out and encourage retention. It is becoming more the norm in the University when discussing access to explore what is being put in place to support and retain students from under-represented groups.

It is fair to say that these very same issues occupy many HE institutions and are not unique to the Open University.

### **2. Have there been major policy reforms, government programs and/or major research initiatives or specific strategies to address access related issues in your country and region? Please identify further sources of information and bibliographic resources that may be of interest to IAU.**

There have been a number of relevant government initiatives to address access related issues in the UK, here are the main examples.

- *Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs)* are viewed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as a critical mechanism for widening participation. A LLN is envisaged as being a group of institutions including HE Institutions and further education colleges that come together to offer progression pathways from FE into and across HE for vocational learners. (The OU is engaged in the development of 14 LLNs)
- *Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances: FE Reform White Paper, 2006.* This White Paper sets out a series of reforms which aim to raise skills and qualification levels for young people and adults to world standards. There is a strengthened role for colleges in providing HE programmes, and an extension of a 'Train to Gain' initiative which helps employers' access workplace training.
- *Aimhigher*  
This is a programme aimed to raise aspirations and stimulate demand for HE. This programme has been running for around 4 years and has concentrated in raising aspirations in school pupils and their parents but more and more it is being extended to Lifelong Learning and adult learners.
- *Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) Scotland* scheme has been launched in an attempt to attract, in particular, low income and non-traditional learners. The Scottish Executive's Lifelong Learning strategy has one of its goals 'a Scotland where people learn irrespective of their background' with a view to improving the life chances of people from all groups through access to the most appropriate opportunities for each individual.

**3. Higher education funding is a related, but an equally vast topic. How can we best link access and funding in a useful and feasible manner in our deliberations? Are there other public policy issues that are of direct importance to the access discussion?**

A paper issued by the Higher Education Funding Council for England in 2003 introduced the changes to the student finance system and prioritises the need to make HE more accessible to more young people. As from this month full time universities are allowed to charge 'top-up fees' of up to £3k per student per year to be repaid after graduation. This is matched by a requirement for universities to draw up Access Agreements to improve access for disadvantaged students. A complex system of bursaries has been developed!

But we know from experience that support grants are better than loans and that charging up-front fees is a major disincentive for those of limited means.

Another issue for us is that students do not necessarily understand how much financial support is available. In FE colleges for example staff and students do not understand that OU degree study can be free of charge for those on benefits/low income. Generally it is felt that the financial aspects of going to university are confusing for students.

Other public policies might include the government's policy on schools – at what age there should be intervention to promote thinking about going to university. Joining up other public policy areas with university access ('joined up thinking') could also be helpful e.g. childcare support schemes – could be a way of reaching parents and encouraging them to consider HE which in turn may influence their children.

**4. Are there any universal values or principles that should underpin access policy in all regions and that might be helpful for all IAU members as they develop or advocate access policies and initiatives?**

The Open University's mission statement embodies the value of being *open to people, places, methods and ideas*. HE in general must be seen to be accessible to all who are capable of study at that level irrespective of their backgrounds. Two core values enshrined in OU policies are:

*We are open to all and value diversity* – we are committed to supporting the participation of those who have been previously disadvantaged in their pursuit of education.

*We believe in the transformative power of education* – we are committed to removing barriers to participation and to stimulating and supporting people's engagement in learning throughout life.

**5. Is there a place or need for an international discussion to stimulate, inform, and improve policies and initiatives that increase and broaden access to higher education? If so, who should be engaged in such a discussion?**

The definitive answer here must be yes! And not only just people like us drawn from Higher Education but also those involved in voluntary and community organisations who really know about the culture and background that non-traditional learners come from and therefore what the barriers to HE are for them.

It is worth noting here that we must connect with the European Access Network. <http://www.ean-edu.org> I am aware of some of their work in the UK but not of their international portfolio.

There is emerging opinion that HE institutions themselves need to consider change rather than expecting students to change to meet the needs of HE. The Access Task Force will provide an ideal forum to explore how this can be done. I believe that international liaison would very much improve our understanding of cultural diversity and I very much look forward to our meeting.

Much of what I say is based on the Indian experience, but might apply somewhat to most of South Asia, particularly to the most populous countries of this region, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

**1. In your country/region and/or institution, what is the most critical access issue for higher education institutions?**

The Millennium Development Goals notwithstanding, universal elementary education is still an unrealized dream in the countries in South Asia. In India, less than half of the age specific population graduate out of elementary schools, and only about 30% successfully complete high school and become eligible for admission into tertiary education. 2. The net enrolment rate in tertiary education (which includes polytechnics and non-degree programmes, besides university level higher education) in the age-specific population of 18-23 is less than 9% in India. This is the aggregate figure. It would be much less in rural areas, among women, and among the socially marginalized groups. 3. There is also considerable divergence in quality and relevance of education at the tertiary sector. Although I do not have the exact figures, it is my guess that what may be considered up-market segment of higher education (which would include professional programmes, postgraduate and research programmes, and liberal undergraduate programmes in elite colleges) would be accessible to not more than a quarter of those accessing tertiary education, which is about 2% of the age specific population.

The school system is fractured vertically into two distinct segments: one, a large body comprising State-subsidized schools transacting curriculum in the local languages, and two, a relatively small number of private, fees-charging English medium schools, mostly in urban locations. The transition rate is almost 100% in the English medium schools and a good proportion of their graduates gain access to the up-market segment of higher education. On the other hand, the State-subsidized vernacular medium schools have a lower transition rate, and a good proportion of their graduates get into the world of work, and would seek access to higher education, if at all, through part-time or distance education programmes. The low-market segment of the tertiary education spectrum is constituted largely of graduates of the vernacular medium schools. Only a small proportion of those graduating out of this school system manage to access the up-market segment of higher education.

So, inadequate institutional capacity of higher education and its narrow social base are the main issues. This means a highly restricted access to quality higher education, and enormous inequity in the distribution of opportunities. Apart from location of residence (urban/rural), social background and gender, language of schooling is also a major factor which influences access to quality higher education.

**2. Have there been major policy reforms, government programs and/or major research initiatives or specific strategies to address access related issues in your country and region? Please identify further sources of information and bibliographic resources that may be of interest to IAU.**

In response to the increasing aspirations for higher education among a fast growing middle class, there have been a few major policy initiatives. In India, the most significant among them is the affirmative action in the form of quota in admission for the socially marginalized groups. There is also complete or partial state subsidy for some social groups to cover their private cost for higher education. Certain provincial governments have enacted tuition waivers for women in higher education.

Another policy initiative has been to establish large distance and open learning systems. Although correspondence courses have existed since early 1960s, a more comprehensive and learner-friendly open learning system took roots only in the 1980s. There are open universities which are exclusively open and distance learning in nature in all the major countries in South Asia. In addition, several of the conventional universities also have their distance education wings. Because of the economy of scales, this is relatively cost effective, and many governments in the region prefer to encourage this mode of higher education while addressing the demand for expansion of the system. However, open and distance learning courses remain a second preference for most aspirants of higher education.

**3. Higher education funding is a related, but an equally vast topic. How can we best link access and funding in a useful and feasible manner in our deliberations? Are there other public policy issues that are of direct importance to the access discussion?**

By and large, higher education is a state-subsidized system in India. Most of the up-market institutions are state-run and highly subsidized. The “quality” institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, etc., are all public institutions. Student fees constitute only a small fraction of the total revenue in public institutions. Much of the recurrent expenditure and the whole of the development expenditure are met out of government grants. Self-financing private institutions is a relatively recent phenomenon. This sector is still of a relatively small size, and is largely restricted to professional and technical education. The emergence of this sector responds to the explicit demand for certain marketable skills, particularly those related to the fast growing IT sector, and is part cause and part consequence of the skewed nature of the distribution of “good” students across various streams. There is also a popular reaction against privatization in higher education, since it is seen as synonymous with commercialization. A true public-private partnership is not yet a reality.

In India, since the National Policy of Education of 1968, it has often been expressed as an intended policy that at least 6 per cent of GDP would be deployed by the State to the education sector, out of which about 1.5 per cent would be to higher education. The Central Advisory Board of Education (an apex body comprising ministers of education of the provincial and the union governments and experts in the field) recommended recently that at least 1 per cent of GDP should be apportioned for non-technical higher education and at least 0.5 per cent for technical education. However, analysis of the actual budget expenditure on education shows that the current allocation for non-technical higher education is 0.37 per cent of GDP, and that for technical education is 0.13 per cent.

**4. & 5. Are there any universal values or principles that should underpin access policy in all regions and that might be helpful for all IAU members as they develop or advocate access policies and initiatives? and Is there a place or need for an international discussion to stimulate, inform, and improve policies and initiatives that increase and broaden access to higher education? If so, who should be engaged in such a discussion?**

The following are some of the issues that could be taken up for discussion and advocacy at the international level:

1. Persuading the governments to make larger grants for education in general and higher education in particular should be an advocacy issue in much of the developing world.
2. Another issue for deliberation and advocacy is the necessity to address the dysfunctional vertical linkage between school and higher education, in terms of language, curricular focus and quality.
3. Promoting private-public partnerships in supporting large and inclusive systems of higher education should be seen as an imperative. Private initiatives restricting their focus merely to creating small and commercially viable enclaves of marketable higher education will not suffice.
4. The boundary between the conventional higher education system and the open and distance learning system should become more diffuse. This would help bridge the gap between access, cost effectiveness and quality. Blended-mode or mixed-mode approaches of course delivery need to be explored.
5. Documentation of access, equity and quality in higher education is an area where much more work needs to be done in the countries of South Asia, and presumably in other parts of the developing world. There is a need for developing international standards, norms, protocols and tools which would serve as suggestive frameworks for documenting parameters related to access, equity and quality in specific contexts.

**1. In your country/region and/or institution, what is the most critical access issue for higher education institutions?**

The biggest concern of Portuguese higher education institutions, public and private, is the decline of the number of applicants in recent years and this is the result of the demographic decline. Portugal has a gross participation of ca. 60%: 356 000 students in 2004/05 for a population of 10 million. This is exactly the same figure as for neighboring Spain. Application to higher education depends on the success in secondary education and this is the limiting factor. Many pupils abandon school, especially at 15, in the transition from basic to secondary school. It is generally accepted that policies to increase access have to be focused on the basic and secondary schools.

**2. Have there been major policy reforms, government programs and/or major research initiatives or specific strategies to address access related issues in your country and region? Please identify further sources of information and bibliographic resources that may be of interest to IAU.**

In the last few years, the Portuguese governments have defined as one of their goals the increase in the participation in school. This is one of the goals of the EU ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress\\_towards\\_common\\_objectives\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress_towards_common_objectives_en.pdf)) to lower the early school leavers to less than 10%. Each public university in Portugal has a Social Services branch charged with administering the government scholarship program and the room and board services. The finance is totally separate from that of the university and the policies and regulations are defined in detail by the central government. Students are represented in the governing body of the social services but their influence is limited. Student lobbying on social support policies is normally directed towards the government, acknowledging the very limited autonomy of the university in this area.

**3. Higher education funding is a related, but an equally vast topic. How can we best link access and funding in a useful and feasible manner in our deliberations? Are there other public policy issues that are of direct importance to the access discussion?**

The Portuguese government controls the expenditure in higher education by controlling the number of vacancies that institutions are allowed to offer. Students not accepted in a public institution may find an alternative paying the full cost at a private institution with a limited public help. It is generally accepted that this is socially unfair. The problem is becoming less acute in recent years as more and more students find vacancies in the public system where fees are low (ca. €900 a year) and social support is low but extensive.

- 4. Are there any ‘universal’ values or principles that should underpin access policy in all regions and that might be helpful for all IAU members as they develop or advocate access policies and initiatives?**

Access to higher education should contribute to increase the social (upwards) mobility. This means creating the conditions for the under privileged to be able to accede but the hindering factors may lay much earlier on making it a very difficult problem.

- 5. Is there a place or need for an international discussion to stimulate, inform, and improve policies and initiatives that increase and broaden access to higher education? If so, who should be engaged in such a discussion?**

The problems vary widely from country to country and from region to region and so will vary the solutions. However, it may be possible to identify a general pattern, or some general patterns, that will help in structuring the discussion. It may be hoped that some general guidelines may be gotten to that will apply worldwide.

***Prof. Alberto Amaral (Portugal)***

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**1. In your country/region and/or institution, what is the most critical access issue for higher education institutions?**

In Portugal there is today a gross participation rate of the relevant age cohort in excess of 50% but with a much higher representation of students from families with higher cultural capital (see annex). As consequence of the dictatorship period that come to an end in 1974 the average education level of the population is quite low. Despite this fact, lifelong education does not yet play a very significant role, which might be explained by the fact that the low literacy levels do not seem to be dramatically punished by the Portuguese economy as Portugal has one of the highest levels of labour participation for those people with the lowest level of literacy. This is partially explained by the overall high rate of labour participation in Portugal, but low unemployment rate is not the only explanation. Part of the reason may be associated with the demands of large sectors of the economy, which so far have not required advanced skills, not even literacy.

So I would consider that the two most critical issues in Portugal are:

- a) Increasing access equity to higher education
- b) Offering a second opportunity to those who have left the education system without a degree.

Jacqueline King proposes a set of four initiatives that might help to solve the problem. Although I agree with the proposal I am not sure that it will be very effective.

**2. Have there been major policy reforms, government programs and/or major research initiatives or specific strategies to address access related issues in your country and region? Please identify further sources of information and bibliographic resources that may be of interest to IAU.**

The government has quite recently changed the access rules for non-traditional students by allowing higher education institutions to recruit students over 23 years of age and without an upper secondary education diploma. Institutions will be responsible for defining the access criteria and for the recognition of prior learning activities and competences.

Portugal has realised that its traditional development model supported by low salaries/low qualification and the use of EU financing to attract foreign investment in labour intensive industries is no longer valid in a world of increasing economic globalisation. And it is aware that one of the country's handicaps is just the low qualification of its active population. Therefore one may say that the hard facts of the economy are one of the most important pressures for change.

The present government has decided to launch a set of programmes aiming at improving the qualification of the Portuguese population and developing life-long learning. These objectives are an integral component of the national effort under the EU Lisbon strategy. Some of the goals defined in the "New Opportunity Programme" are:

- a) Increasing the offer of vocational education in upper secondary education to enrol an additional number of 100,000 students. By 2010 vocational education should represent 50% of the total offer of upper secondary education, the other 50% corresponding to general education leading directly to higher education.

Table 1 – Increasing the offer of vocational education in upper secondary education

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Additional vacancies		+ 5,000	+5,000	+10,000	+10,000	+5,000
Accumulated new vacancies		+5,000	+10,000	+20,000	+30,000	+35,000
Total yearly vacancies	110,000	115,000	120,000	130,000	140,000	145,000

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Work and Social Solidarity, Programme New Opportunities

- b) Offering a new opportunity to students that would leave the education system before completing basic education. Until 2010 there will be an adequate number of vacancies in vocational programmes offering an alternative route for the completion of basic education.

Table 2 – Increasing the offer of vocational education in basic education

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Additional vacancies		+2,500	+2,500	+2,500	+2,500	+2,500
Accumulated new vacancies		+2,500	+5,000	+7,500	+10,000	+12,500
Total yearly vacancies	15,000	17,500	20,000	22,500	25,000	27,500

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Work and Social Solidarity, Programme New Opportunities

- c) Integrating vocational courses in upper secondary schools that traditionally only provided general courses leading to higher education.

Table 3 – New vocational courses in upper secondary schools

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
New courses	40	100	200	300	450

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Work and Social Solidarity, Programme New Opportunities

- d) To implement a system for the recognition and certification of competencies and to offer new vocational training opportunities to adults with low qualifications.

**3. Higher education funding is a related, but an equally vast topic. How can we best link access and funding in a useful and feasible manner in our deliberations? Are there other public policy issues that are of direct importance to the access discussion?**

Systems of needs-based financial aid are important for increasing the participation of low-income students, although this needs to be combined with other policies. There are two important aspects that need to be considered:

- a) Students from lower income families are more likely to show debt aversion.
- b) Loss aversion<sup>1</sup> predicts that students will be more deterred by the costs of study, like tuition fees and loans, than they will be attracted by subsidies, like grants, scholarships, future income, labour market opportunities and status.
- c) Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are likely to value financial incentives/ consequences related to study choices differently (more negatively) than students from higher socio-economic backgrounds.
- d) Loan contingent schemes are difficult to implement and require substantial public investment.
- e) Foregone earnings play an important role in the decisions of students and may explain why students from lower income families give preference to shorter degrees (polytechnics vs. universities).

**4. Are there any ‘universal’ values or principles that should underpin access policy in all regions and that might be helpful for all IAU members as they develop or advocate access policies and initiatives?**

Access equity is a fundamental ‘universal’ value. To open new entrance roads to higher education in order to attract non-traditional students, and to diversify the system both regarding curricula and study programmes as well as organisation means obviously increasing the chances of meeting the individual plural demands, but, above, all it also means having an opportunity of including individuals or social groups that are prematurely secluded from traditional education. In this sense, it is indisputable that increasing the rate of participation in higher education by means of special non-traditional programmes integrated in a concept of lifelong education may also represent an important policy to counteract social and educative exclusion phenomena, thus leading to a better qualified society.

The Social Policy perspective has been affirmed by the 1976 Resolution of the Council and Ministers for Education (OJ C 38):

(...) the achievement of equal opportunity for access to all forms of education is an essential aim for the educational policies of all the Member States and its important must be stressed in conjunction with other economic and social policies in order to achieve equality of opportunity in society.”

**5. Is there a place or need for an international discussion to stimulate, inform, and improve policies and initiatives that increase and broaden access to higher education? If so, who should be engaged in such a discussion?**

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<sup>1</sup> Loss aversion refers to the situation where people are significantly more averse to losses than they are attracted to gains of the same size (The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences 2002).

Yes, I agree that there is need for international discussions opening the way to innovative responses to this problem, combined with targeted research on the factors that influence participation of young people in higher education. It would be important to attract the attention of organisations such as UNESCO and OCDE (?) or even the European Commission and the European Council of Ministers of Education.

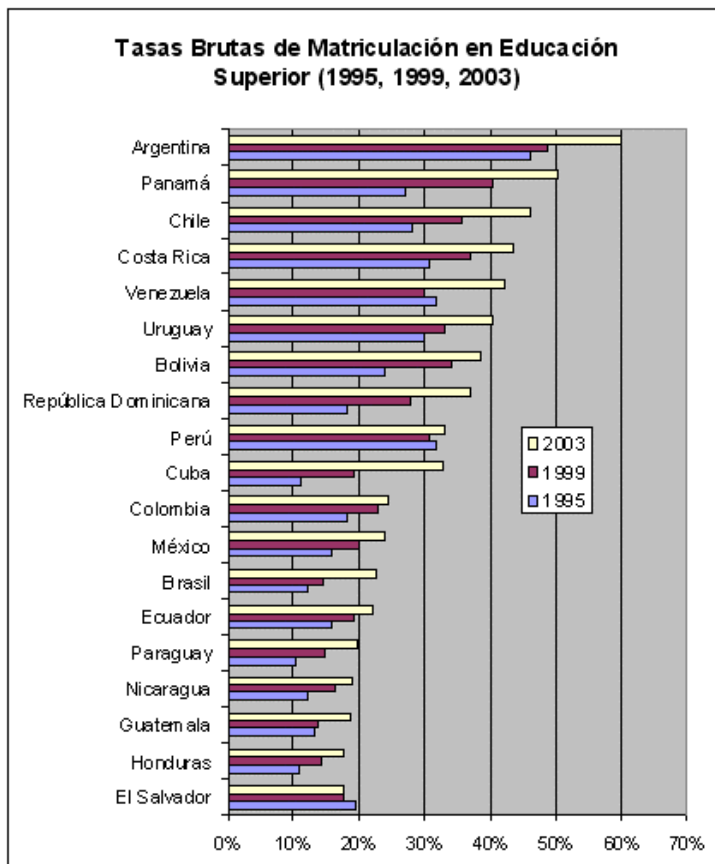
***Prof. Marilia Morosini (Brazil)***

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**1. In your country/region and/or institution, what is the most critical access issue for higher education institutions?**

The critical access issue is the **low** percentage of the population in Higher Education in Latin America. Despite the expansion that has been occurring in the HES, namely: HEI (1950 – 75 (HEI); 2003 - 1 500 HEI); enrollments (1950 - 267 000 students; 2000 - 12 millions of students) the HE gross rate is low in comparison to developed countries and presents variations between countries, as can be seen in graph 1.

*Graph 1 HE Enrollment gross rate, Latin America, 1995 – 1999 - 2003*



<http://www.iesalc.unesco.org.ve/pruebaobservatorio/boletin118/boletinNro118.htm>>. Acesso em: 20 abr. 2006.

In all the countries, with the exception of Uruguay, the majority of those who have access to higher education comes from the 40 per cent high family income. Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica are the countries with higher restrictions to accessing university for young people from low family income. (SITEAL, 2006)

**Brazil** has the same situation: low gross rate of HE access and variation between regions and states. You can see in table 1 these differences in all the system of HE: institutions, courses and enrollments. The principal issue is the relation between developed region and

high rate, as in the south-east, that had, in 2004, 50% of HEI, 46% Courses and 50% enrollments, and, in the north region the data is the opposite: 6% HEI, 8% Courses and 6% Enrollments.

Table 1 - Percentage of institutions, courses and enrollments of presence undergraduate, by region Brazil 1996 e 2004

Region	Institutions (%)		Courses (%)		Enrollments (%)	
	1996	2004	1996	2004	1996	2004
North	3,7	5,9	6,2	8,2	4,1	<b>6,0</b>
north-east	10,5	17,2	15,5	17,8	15,0	16,3
south west SE	62,4	50,0	47,8	45,8	55,0	<b>49,4</b>
South	13,2	16,7	22,0	19,1	18,7	19,1
central-west	10,2	10,7	8,4	9,1	7,2	9,2

The HES is characterized by the strong expansion of HE private Institutions after the LDB – (Brazilian Law of Education - 1996) . From 1996 to 2004 the rate of expansion was 120% for HEI 80% for Courses.

Paradox: despite the low gross rate (18,65) and e liquid (10,5%) in HE; despite the strong expansion of HEI, we identified a gradual increase in unfilled places (table.2)

Table 2 : Evolution of percentage of unfilled places in Brazil, 1996 - 2004

Category	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total	19,0	17,9	17,6	18,7	26,2	26,4	32,0	36,9	43,8
Private	22,9	22,4	21,6	23,0	31,5	31,2	37,4	42,2	49,5

Source: MEC/INEP/Deaes

Among possible explanations about the paradox identified are a high number of people belonging to a social class that, even wishing access to HE, have no financial conditions. Thus, despite the National Education Plan (PNE, 09.01.2001, Law n° 10.172), which states that “... until the end of the decade, the HE offer must reach 30% of the 18 to 24 year-olds”, this seems quite difficult.

- 2. Have there been major policy reforms, government programs and/or major research initiatives or specific strategies to address access related issues in your country and region? Please identify further sources of information and bibliographic resources that may be of interest to IAU.**

In Brazil, the Lei Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (n. 9495/96) [ Law establishing the guidelines for National Education] allowed the expansion of the HES and its flexibilization in terms of HEI, Courses and Curricula. Since the year 2000 some governmental measures have been taken to implement affirmative action programs:

**1. PROUNI** – University for all program (Programa Universidade para Todos - Law 11 096 of 13.01.2005) established a percentage of scholarships (full or partial) in private HEI for students with special needs, teaching degrees for public school teachers and public high school students or full scholarship students in Private HEI. The HEI is exempted from four federal taxes: Contribution for Financing Social Security (Cofins); Contribution for the PIS/Pasep; Social Contribution Social over “liquid” revenue (CSLL); and Income Tax for corporation (IRPJ). The scholarship is granted to Brazilians that do not hold a university degree: full scholarship -, to students whose monthly family earnings per capita do not exceed the value equivalent to 1 ½ (one and a half) minimum salary; and partial scholarship 50% (fifty per cent) or 25% (twenty five per cent), to students whose monthly family income does not exceed 3 (three) minimum salaries. Besides the social-economic requirement, scoring higher than 45 points in the National Exam of for High School Students (Enem) is a pre-requisite to receiving a scholarship. In 2005 and 2006, a total of 251 232 scholarships were granted (<http://prouni-inscricao.mec.gov>).

**2. Política de Cotas** for public HEI. Quotas policies was inspired by the World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, Xenophobia and correlated forms of Intolerance, (ONU, Durban, South Africa, September, 2001). In Brazil, the public HEI, the following are identified:

- UERJ – Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro - 2001 established a percentage of university places for afro-Brazilians.
- Universidade Federal da Bahia, implanted the quotas system which is based on self-declaration,
- Universidade Estadual do Mato Grosso do Sul - UEMS implatou the systems in 2003.
- *University of Brasilia (UnB) reserving 20% of places in all courses for “black” students.*

**3. Bolsa Permanência (Permanence scholarship) is a financial benefit (US\$130,00)**, for students with a full PROUNI scholarship , enrolled on courses with 6 semesters duration and 6 (six) hours class time.

**4. FIES – Fundo de Financiamento ao Estudante do Ensino Superior (Financial Fund to the HE Student) MEC** - program destined to financing undergraduate studies for students who do not have the financial means to pay full tuition. (<http://portal.mec.gov.br>)

**5. Universidade Aberta do Brasil (Open University of Brazil)– UAB** – it was created by the Minitry of Education in 2005 to articulate and integrate a national system for distance higher education, on na experimental basis, aiming at unifying actions, programs, projects, activities belonging to public policies geared towards the expansion of offerings for free and good HE in Brazil. (<http://portal.mec.gov.br>).

OTHER Programs:

**1. Diversity Program in the University MEC** – The objective is the social, ethnic and racial inclusion of socially disfavored youth and adults, especially afro-descendents and indigenous. Funding of up to US\$ 100,000 to HEI (Requisites: one year of experience in managing educational projects oriented to socially-disfavored groups; enrollments of 51% of afro-descendents and/or indigenous and offers and stipend (U\$15,00); Courses 400 – 900 hours, 4-9- months; and the pedagogical project must offer cultural goods and a social education. Project evaluations are run by the MEC. (<http://www.mec.gov.br/semtec/diversidade/default.shtm>)

**2. Program for HE training and indigenous teaching credentials** – PROLIND, Policies to Fund Indigenous HE Programs (<Http://Portal.Mec.Gov.Br>)

**3. Creation of the Federal Autonomous University Foundation of the Indigenous People - Fundação Universidade Federal Autônoma dos Povos Indígenas. (Project of Law N. 1.456, of 2003** – it aims at “providing HE, conducting research in the different areas of knowledge and promoting continuing education, with special attention to history, culture and art, and scientific activities developed by the indigenous people.”

Brazil has programs to receive exchange students from African countries, East Timor, and other Portuguese speaking countries, as well as with other Latin American countries. These students enroll in undergraduate and graduate courses in Brazilian universities funded by Brazilian scholarships.

**3. Higher education funding is a related, but an equally vast topic. How can we best link access and funding in a useful and feasible manner in our deliberations? Are there other public policy issues that are of direct importance to the access discussion?**

As already demonstrated in the answer to question 1, Latin America in general, from 1990, expands the higher education system. Despite this expansion, access rates to higher education are low and concentrated in certain social levels of the population. The true question is the social question: in order to improve access level, social levels should be improved.

In Brazil, an increasing number of unfilled vacancies have been observed. AMARAL (2006) presents data concerning Brazil:

“... the number of students that are able to pay would be reaching the limit. The private system of higher education would still afford a small expansion of 52,660 incoming registrations. This date allows us to conclude that the responsibility to reach 30 per cent of students (18 – 24 years old) in the higher education system until 2001 will demand joint responsibility (public and private sectors).”

These data allows us to conclude that access policy is quite important, but, isolated, is not capable of making relevant changes such as social inclusion. Related public policies are needed: policies that qualify candidates to higher education and policies that provide them with material conditions to devote themselves to post-secondary studies.

Therefore, we can suggest the following public policies:

1. Levels other than higher education:

- improving the public basic educational system (elementary school and high school), to enable a better education for those that attended the public school system.
- scholarships for the least-favored social classes so that they can complete high school.

2. At the higher education level:

- Increasing the number of available vacancies in the public higher education system;
- Scholarships at the HES to students that attended the public high school system or that had full scholarships in private high schools.
- Monitoring students that entered HES through affirmative actions, levelling courses, etc.
- Increasing the quality of the HES, especially in the private system (Brazil has a good system of course evaluation. The evaluative process, at the level of graduate system, is coordinated by CAPES, and at the undergraduate level, the evaluation is run by INEP - National Institute of educational studies and statistics.

**4. Are there any universal values or principles that should underpin access policy in all regions and that might be helpful for all IAU members as they develop or advocate access policies and initiatives?**

1) Equality Right.

Equality Right is the main principle that underpins access policy. In Brazil, this right is present in the Federal Constitution, among the fundamental principles of the Republic. Article 5 of the Constitution states that education is a right for all and a responsibility of the school and family. Education is the possibility of obtaining a better life and the decreasing social gap. It is proved that education impacts directly on employment opportunities.

2) Education as a human capital.

Education as a human capital is the foundation of the knowledge-society paradigm. Education is considered investment, which reflects in the economic development of a country.

3) Education as a fundamental value to the nation-state.

In the three-level game (multilateral, regional and domestic), education is one of the fundamental values to the preservation of the nation-state. Throughout its formative function, it preserves the material and immaterial culture of a country and consolidates the national identity.

In the present times, education as a formative principle faces a delicate moment: with increasing globalization, one may argue that the consolidation of a national identity will no longer occur. For a controversial example, consider the inclusion of higher education in the range of services subject to the World Trade Organization.

**5. Is there a place or need for an international discussion to stimulate, inform, and improve policies and initiatives that increase and broaden access to higher education? If so, who should be engaged in such a discussion?**

The discussion about access to higher education is not limited to the nation-state. In a context of globalization and transnationalization, it expands and is founded, not only on equality rights, but on the concept of survival of the world marked by strong competition. The highest levels of education tend to rely on “mind opening” and respect for differences, which can contribute to improving social interaction, besides redistributive improvement originated from higher gains in the work market.

In a global level, the discussion about access to higher education should involve multilateral organizations, such as UNESCO, World Bank, OECD; and also public policy representatives and scientists in domestic, regional and transnational levels. This would enable cooperation among these different actors to propose and promote policies that contribute to student inclusion.

In the nation-state level, access to higher education develops human capital in the country, allows for higher economic development and minimizes internal differences, given that there exists a direct correlation between educational level and income.

In Brazil, since the present century, affirmative action policies for higher education access have been implemented. The forum for discussion is still predominantly in the state level. In this scenario, Brazil has already implemented public policies geared toward standardization, coordination and promotion of scholarships in universities: PROUNI, FIES, Open University, quote policies, and permanency programs. The discussion involves the entirety of society, but is limited to groups representing minorities. In the academic level, the discussion is also present, but at a marginal level. However, since the Brazilian higher education system is organized and regulated by the state, affirmative action programs have a strong impact on society.

Finally, given that the Brazilian state is evaluative, there should be included in the discussion groups that think and assess the quality of the university. In addition, minority groups should also have a voice in this debate.

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( Fuentes utilizadas: Argentina - EPH del INDEC; Bolivia - ECH del INE; Brasil - PNAD del IBGE; Costa Rica - EHPM del INEC; Chile - CASEN de MIDEPLAN; El Salvador – EHPM de la DIGESTYC; Guatemala - ECV del INE; Honduras - EPHPM del INE; México - ENIGH del INEGI; Nicaragua - EMNV del INEC; Paraguay - EIDH de la DGEEC; Uruguay - ECH del INE.

***Prof. John Ssebuwufu (Uganda)***

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**1. In your country (Uganda)/region (Africa) and/or institution, where does the emphasis lie: increasing or widening participation?**

*Please answer this question by differentiating between emphasis at  
→ the institutional level*

Emphasis is on widening access particularly for the girl-child/female and disadvantaged groups

*→ the governmental level*

At this level it is both

**2. What is the rationale for improving access to higher education in your country/region/institution?**

*Please answer this question by differentiating between rationales from  
→ an institutional perspective*

It is an attempt to redress historical imbalances. The hard economical conditions in many parts of Africa coupled with traditions and cultural practices that marginalized the women; parents always forced to think of the boy-child/male first when it came to paying for the education of their children. The argument was that the husbands could fend for girls when they married. This led to a situation where fewer girls had access to higher levels of education as many had been excluded from the system at the lower level

*→ a governmental perspective*

More or less the same argument but for the Government, increasing access to all levels of education is an obligation enshrined in the national constitution and other international charters to which it is signatory. Education at all levels is now seen as a right and not a privilege.

Education is also recognised as key to future as the world becomes more globalised and moves into the knowledge-based economy

**3. Have there been major policy reforms, government programs and/or major research initiatives or specific strategies to address the issue of increasing access and related issues in your country/region/institution?**

For Uganda, Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE), Provision of Private Universities, freeing of public universities to admit fee-paying students are some of the major policy reforms in the Education Sector.

**4. In what way do student-funding policies in your country/region/institution promote or impede access to higher education?**

In Uganda, every academic year, the Government provides full scholarships to only about 4000 students out of over 20,00 students qualified to enter university. The scholarships were only tenable at the four (4) public universities. Till about two years ago, the scholarships went to best-qualified students – the merit system. Unfortunately students who attended urban and well-endowed high schools had the best chances of winning the scholarships. Since these good secondary schools were expensive, only the children the well off parents could attend them. Children of the poor and from disadvantaged regions of the country – the remote rural communities were automatically excluded as they were always out-competed in the public examinations. Later the quota system was introduced to redress the problem. The rest of the students have to pay for their university education and many cannot afford. Funding is a serious impediment to access

**5. In your country/region/institution is there any reflection or discussion of how higher education institutions need to change to meet access/diversity objectives?**

Yes the debate is on going along the following lines:

- Provision of more public universities
- Distance Learning (evening programmes/ external degree programmes)
- E-learning and Virtual University
- National Open University
- Diversified sources of funding for the economically disadvantaged students like the Female Scholarship Initiative at Makerere [University funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Curriculum delivery based on the more flexible semester system that allows a student to accumulate credits and also be able to take a break if the funding runs out and return later to resume his/her studies. Originally universities operated a very rigid duration-fixed programmes