



## **HIGHER EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CONTRIBUTION OF UNESCO CHAIRS**

### **COLLOQUIUM REPORT**

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> to Friday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

**UNESCO Chair and Centre for Comparative Education Research  
School of Education  
University of Nottingham, UK**

The inaugural colloquium of the United Kingdom National Commission's UNESCO Chairs' Group took place at the University of Nottingham, 17th-18th January, 2008, hosted by the UNESCO Chair of the Political Economy of Education and Centre for Comparative Education Research. The topic for the colloquium was 'Higher Education and International Development: The contribution of UNESCO Chairs'.

There were twenty-four participants, comprised of both existing and prospective UNESCO Chair-holders in the UK, and guests including Dr Pat Dolan, NUI Galway, as part of his involvement in establishing the first UNESCO Chair in the Republic of Ireland.

The Colloquium was welcomed to the University of Nottingham by Professor David Riley, Pro Vice Chancellor, who re-affirmed the university's commitment to the mission of UNESCO and specifically to the Chair of the Political Economy of Education, held by Professor W. John Morgan. The next speaker was Professor Alec Boksenberg, Chair of the UK National Commission for UNESCO, who spoke on UNESCO's review of the Natural Sciences and Social and Human Sciences programmes, how this would affect the work of the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks, and the importance of the interdisciplinary UNESCO Chairs as part of the enormous expertise base available to UNESCO. Professor Boksenberg was followed by Professor Georges Haddad, Director of UNESCO's Division of Higher Education, who spoke of the importance of 'the university' and of higher education as a driving force for development. Professor Haddad presented his vision for the development of the Chairs' programme with an emphasis on a new generation of innovative, entrepreneurial and interdisciplinary Chairs dedicated to UNESCO's mission and objectives, of his plans for a World Conference on Higher Education and Research, focussing on quality and equality, in July 2009 and for co-operation with the United Nations' University.

The remainder of the colloquium was given over to reports from Chairholders on the purpose and activities of individual Chairs which demonstrated the impressive body of work that was being undertaken by the UK Chairs in support of UNESCO's mission; delegates discussed a broad range of (often interlinking) work, which encompassed areas such as international teacher mobility, leadership and management in Southern African universities, ICT for development, inter-religious understanding, intercultural education, education and conflict, education as a humanitarian response, HIV/AIDS and health security, and gender-based violence.

A number of new Chair proposals are expected to be received by the UK National Commission for UNESCO for its consideration in 2008, including proposals from four of the higher education institutions represented at the Colloquium:

University of Bath – lead: Professor Suzanne Skevington

The University of Bath intends to submit a proposal in 2008 for the establishment of a *UNESCO Chair in Quality of Life*. The Chair's programme will focus on education to enhance quality of life, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

University of Gloucestershire – lead: Professor Stephen Martin

The University of Gloucestershire intends to submit a proposal in 2008 for the establishment of jointly hosted *UNESCO Chairs in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) - Professional Practice: Skills for Sustainability* - at the Sustainability Institutes in the University of Gloucestershire and the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). The Chairs' programme will focus on the re-orientation of professional education towards sustainable development. It will involve supporting the educators engaged in formal professional training, working with professional bodies, which certify or accredit formal courses as well as providing opportunities for professionals to learn in practice in their workplace through mentoring and action learning.

It will develop an inter disciplinary programme of research, training, curriculum design and policy analysis in the field of professional practice, supporting our understanding of inter-professional learning and practice in the work place.

University of Hertfordshire – lead: Professor Luciano Floridi

The University of Hertfordshire intends to submit a proposal in 2008 for the establishment of a *UNESCO Chair in Information and Computer Ethics*. The Chair's programme would contribute to UNESCO's efforts to address the ethical challenges posed by ICT, in order to foster the sustainable development of a fair and multicultural information society for all.

Newcastle University – lead: Professor Henry Etzkowitz / Dr Liana Marina Ranga

Newcastle University Business School intends to submit a proposal in 2008 for the establishment of a *UNESCO Chair in Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. The Chair's programme focuses on the development of national and regional knowledge-based economies through enhanced interactions between University-Industry-Government (Triple Helix actors) as the key innovation stakeholders and contributors to knowledge generation, diffusion and use. The Chair aims to be a distinctive centre for education and research in the innovation and entrepreneurship areas, illustrating the concept of 'entrepreneurial university' by linking academic research and educational programmes with various projects and growing networks of firms, government agencies and universities in the region and in the partner countries (Brazil, China, India, Ethiopia), as well as international organisations'.

The Colloquium concluded with discussion of future directions and agreement:-

- To continue to build the UNESCO Chairs' Group in the United Kingdom through encouraging and supporting both existing Chairs and proposals for new Chairs.
- To continue to hold regular business meetings through which to develop strategy and maintain cohesive links with the Division of Higher Education at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.
- To work towards Group participation in the planned World Conference of Higher Education and Research in July 2009.
- To consider the possibilities of links with Chairs' Groups in other National Commissions.
- To continue the Colloquium series in 2009, with the University of Ulster offering to host.

Further information on the Colloquium – including papers and biographies - can be downloaded from the UK National Commission for UNESCO website at [http://www.unesco.org.uk/UNESCO\\_Chairs\\_Colloquium.htm](http://www.unesco.org.uk/UNESCO_Chairs_Colloquium.htm)

Additional information on the UNITWIN UNESCO Chairs Programme can also be found on the UK National Commission for UNESCO website ([www.unesco.org.uk](http://www.unesco.org.uk)) and the UNESCO website ([www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org))