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Bildung und Erziehung

Lebenslanges Lernen zwischen Programmatik und Steuerung

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Lebenslanges Lernen als Steuerungsmodell
staatlicher Bildungspolitik

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Das bildungspolitische Konzept der Kultus-
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Profiling Regional Engagement and
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Chris Duke

Lifelong Learning Beyond Europe – Migration
to Asia or Another Transformation?

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Lifelong Learning in China for all

Heribert Hinzen

Initiatives Towards Non-formal Education and
Lifelong Learning in Southeast Asia

böhlau

Ausgehend von der internationalen Bildungsreform in den 1970er Jahren ist das Konzept des „Lebenslangen Lernens“ in nationalen Bildungspolitiken weiterentwickelt worden. Es sind Konzeptionen eingebracht worden, mit denen auch die unterschiedlich erworbenen Kompetenzen in der individuellen Bildungsbiographie berücksichtigt werden sollten. Die Säulen des Bildungswesens sollten in einem System lebensübergreifender Bildung aufgehoben sein. Inzwischen mehren sich die Stimmen, die bildungspolitisches Handeln verlangen und „Lebenslanges Lernen“ als Steuerungsinstrument in der Bildungsverwaltung einsetzen wollen. Wie weit sich diese Tendenz durchgesetzt hat, soll hier unter bildungstheoretischer und bildungsinstitutioneller Perspektive verfolgt werden.



Bildung und Erziehung

Begründet von Franz Hilker †.

Herausgeber:

Prof. Dr. Walter Georg, Fernuniversität in Hagen
 Prof. Dr. Manfred Heinemann, Leibniz-Universität Hannover
 Prof. (H) Dr. Heribert Hinzen, dvv international, Vientiane, Laos
 Prof. Dr. Joachim H. Knoll, Ruhr-Universität, Bochum
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 Prof. Dr. Una M. Röhr-Sendlmeier, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn
 PD Dr. Sonja Steier, Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Sprecherin des Herausgeberkollegiums:

Prof. Dr. Eva Matthes, Universität Augsburg, Lehrstuhl für Pädagogik, Universitätsstraße 10,
 D-86159 Augsburg, Tel.: +49(0)821 5985574, E-Mail: eva.matthes@phil.uni-augsburg.de

Redaktion:

Prof. Dr. Anatoli Rakhkochkine, Universität Leipzig, Erziehungswissenschaftliche Fakultät,
 Dittrichring 5–7, D-04109 Leipzig, Tel.: +49(0)341 97-31431, Fax: +49(0)341 97-31439,
 E-Mail: anatoli.rakhkochkine@uni-leipzig.de

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PROFILING REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: CLOSING THE ENGAGEMENT GAB

Summary: This article explores the engagement profiles of higher education institutions (HEIs) and highlights issues that add value to their espoused ‘closeness’ to regional government, business and communities.. It reveals those domains where there is a mis-match in current engagement practice, referred to here as the *engagement gap*. It is argued that regional authorities should be encouraged to ‘reach in’ to demand more of the HEIs in their localities, steering them to fulfil their responsibilities to be lifelong learning organisations.

1. Introduction

The Pascal University Regional Engagement (PURE) initiative is an extensive international research and development project that has been carried out in 19 regions across the world (see DUKE/OSBORNE/WILSON 2013). The project has revealed both a desire on the part of regional authorities in many parts of the world to engage with HEIs, but also an uncertainty about how to develop a successful and sustainable relationship with the higher education sector. The research appears against a backcloth of vigorous debate both in and between universities, and in government policy in a number of countries, about public funding for higher education and about what is variously described as universities’ community service, lifelong learning, third mission, or, as used here, regional and community engagement roles. The debate has at its core the assumptions that both regions and HEIs can benefit through partnership and that universities can contribute more to civil society in return for public moneys invested in them.

2. The regional engagement debate

The current world-wide interest in regional engagement is in itself not new. It is generally acknowledged to have its roots in the Land-Grant Colleges in the US and civic universities in the UK (MCDOWELL 2003; SANDERSON 1972). To the story should be added transnational progressive reform sentiment, which in the late 19th

century saw the establishment of University Extension colleges and university social settlement houses across the (then) British Empire and in North America (HAMILTON 2008).

As an ideal, regional engagement requires that universities share their knowledge, resources and skills, and listen and learn from the expertise and insight of the different communities with which they engage (BEACONS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT 2010). The focus is on exchange and not simply knowledge transfer. In recent years regional engagement has received fresh attention as part of a broader debate on higher education (OECD 1999, 2001). National and international discourse has focused on the need to make HEIs more 'relevant', 'efficient', more transparent and more accountable, and more international and competitive (SLOWEY/SCHUETZE 2012, 3). A general concern has been expressed that teaching and research activities in universities are often not sufficiently aligned with specific economic and social objectives (CHATTERTON et al. 2000, 475). The OECD has highlighted the need for HEIs to reconcile the tensions between two competing rationalities; the higher education rationality of detachment and the science and technology driven-rationality of close interaction with business and the community (OECD 2007). Overall there is a sense that universities should not be allowed to 'stand apart'. Many universities and university networks have responded to this challenge, as is evident is the work of the *Big Tent*¹ of networks concerned with promoting community engagement in universities around the world.

Public spending pressures in different parts of the world have added urgency to the debate as HEIs come to terms with the changing public funding models that are emerging in different countries. This in part manifests itself in governments being increasingly pre-occupied with securing impact at regional, national and international level from public investment in higher education (INMAN/SCHUETZE 2011; MOHRMAN/SHI/FEINBLATT/CHOW 2009).

A further impulse for regional engagement is interest in the notion of lifelong learning. In the 1990s lifelong learning was seen as a key higher educational mechanism to underpin the development of the 'knowledge economy' and therefore a tool in the drive for modernisation and development (SLOWEY/SCHUETZE 2012, 7). In Europe, the Bologna Declaration in 1999 saw lifelong learning as an essential tool in helping higher education face societal challenges of competitiveness and use of new technologies to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and quality of life. By 2008 54 % of HEIs in Europe claimed to have established strategies for lifelong learning (DAVIES/FEUTRIE, 2008). The interrelationship between lifelong learning and higher education is vital for how HEIs address regional engagement. Factors essential for support of lifelong learning such as

quality teaching, widening participation, services to business and communities and other contributions to civil society are central to regional strategies of HEIs (WATSON 2009).

3. An engagement model

Regional engagement, as used here, refers to the set of relationships through which HEIs and their staff and students connect and share their work with the public. In practice all HEIs have a complex network of links with their surrounding region, some formal, some driven from central management, many more dependent on the initiative of faculty members, and many more again arising from student learning programmes, or informal student activity. It is through this web of relationships that an HEI presents a profile of engagement to its region and local communities.

The particular profile of engagement will be influenced by many factors including the historical mandate and role, tradition and culture, and geographical location of an HEI (SCHUETZE 2010, 13). Just like regional authorities, a higher education provider has to 'manage' its relationships with a complex array of other organisations within its environment. Engaging with numerous regional stakeholders can present institutions themselves with many challenges.

The profile of engagement, which a HEI has with its surrounding region, can be seen as the result of its efforts to establish and maintain its position with regard to three important contexts within which it operates.

The *Area Context* refers to the social, economic, cultural and geographical characteristics of the region in which it is located, which are likely to influence, among other things, the background of the students who attend, the opportunities for applied research in local industries and public agencies, and the expectations of public bodies and other stakeholders of the provider.

The *Market Context* refers to HE providers being a part of a market regionally, nationally and internationally. Institutions will be subject to market pressures arising particularly from the funding regime in which they are placed, and through their strategic decisions and marketing will look to position themselves in such a way to sustain themselves within the market, with important implications for the priority which is attached to aspects of regional engagement.

The *Institutional Context* is important because having taken a strategic position; HEIs have to establish arrangements to support this through institutional allocation of resources, management practices and incentives for staff to deliver programmes consistent with the desired direction. This may be particularly problematic in universities which tend to be large, diverse, 'loose' organisations, and in

which objectives of individual scholarship may not be consistent with institutional desires for public engagement activities.

The pattern and profile of regional engagement will be the outcome of the interaction between actions taken in each of these different contexts, and especially shaped by factors such as the funding regime in which it is placed; institutional policy choices relating crucially to the emphasis placed on research relative to teaching, the emphasis placed on the pursuit of international standing relative to national or regional orientation and the extent to which regional engagement activities are recognised and incorporated into resource allocation within the institution. The judgements made by higher education providers on these issues are likely to lead them to prioritise the broad elements in their mission – research, teaching and regional/community engagement – in different ways as they seek to define their role and place within the world of higher education.

There are a number of ways in which higher education providers' responses to these pressures might be classified. In the US for example, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) has developed a system of classifying 'institutions of community engagement' (CFAT 2010). Carnegie takes into account such indicators as 'institutional identity and culture' and commitment to 'outreach and partnership'. In recent years the debate has focused on the extent to which engagement is seen by HEIs as a core element of their mission (KELLOGG COMMISSION 1999). It is suggested that increasingly HEIs might look to position themselves in one of a number of categories; one such categorisation distinguishes six principle forms as should in Table 1. To elite institutions, research intensive institutions, teaching institutions and regional institutions may be added specialist institutions with a particular focus on an aspect of science, or as schools of music or art, whilst others are 'short-cycle' providers offering mainly vocational degree programmes. For the purposes of the discussion here we will adopt a categorisation according mainly to the priority 'mission' of the institution, as set out below.

Table 1: Main categories of higher education providers

Category	Mission priority order
Research intensive	(International) Research, teaching, region
Teaching	Teaching, research, region
Regional intensive	Region, teaching, (applied) research
Specialist	All in specialist field
Short cycle	Vocational training, region

It will be seen that all categories espouse each 'mission' to some extent: the distinction between categories rests on the relative priority afforded to each. Regio-

nal intensive universities for example place significant emphasis on engagement at the local and regional level. In many countries, the regionally focussed university remains in an uncertain position given prevailing national and increasingly international, policies and perspectives in higher education. In some parts of the world however the concept of a regional intensive university is finding increasing legislative and programme recognition. In Sweden, for example, changes in higher education legislation during the 1990s, whilst giving universities more autonomy over their internal affairs, placed greater responsibility on them to work with their communities, in particular with industry and business. Elsewhere, regional universities themselves have formed associations e.g. in Australia and in South Africa, to help higher education better adapt and contribute to government regional policies in these countries.

4. Regional role and impact

If done well, regional engagement generates mutual benefit for both HEIs and regions. An OECD (2007) study maintains that regional engagement activity comes from appreciation of shared interests and that this shared interest is primarily economic. For HEIs, according to the evidence of the PURE international project, regional engagement can build trust, understanding and collaboration, and increase the higher education sector's relevance and contribution to, and impact on, business, public policy and services, social and cultural life and wider civil society within their region and local community. It can also enable universities to meet the challenge of the need to demonstrate the impact of their research.

For regions, HEIs are major employers, significant consumers of goods and services and their presence will have obvious implications for housing, transportation and other infrastructure development. Knowledge transfer can assist regions to develop sustainable policies and practice as increasingly demanded by national governments. The provision of resources for continuing professional development and training locally offers the potential to raise skill levels in the local population and can stimulate lifelong learning and in turn boost the local economy. More fundamentally the recognition of universities as an important aspect of regional development policies is now increasingly clear in many parts of the world (OECD 2007). The significance for regional development placed on innovation, knowledge creation, human resource development and social capital in achieving regional growth and development accord HEIs a significant role in their regions. In Australia for example a study has shown that regional universities can make a substantial contribution to regional economies and their collective contribution to

the national economy can also significant (CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY/SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY 2009).

The impact of regional engagement activities extends beyond the economic and includes among other outcomes the localisation of the learning process through work-based learning, graduate employment in the region, continuing education, professional development and lifelong learning activities, cultural and community development, social cohesion and sustainable development on which innovation depends (CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY/SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY 2009, 15). Whilst there are numerous examples of economic analysis of the impact of HEIs on regional economies, the impact of HEIs on the social and cultural quality of life in regions, and their contribution to wellbeing, regional identity and sense of place are less well understood. HEIs contribute to the range of cultural events and facilities in their geographical areas. Culture is of growing significance in regional development both as an economic activity and as a dimension of community identity, and underpins the attractiveness of a region. Acknowledging the social and cultural impact of engagement adds to understanding of the significance of HEIs for the vibrancy of regional life as well as its economic development. This broader potential provides compelling arguments for regions to 'reach in' to HEIs to demand more of higher education as an asset in their localities.

5. Engagement for a purpose

Despite the possibilities afforded by regional engagement activity, the data from the PURE global regional study shows that HEIs across the world are positioning themselves in distinctly different ways when defining their own mission and strategy with regard to engagement and the contribution they make to the development of the local region. Regional impacts and benefits arising from HEIs are not systematically realised. The research suggests that regional engagement activity can often be piecemeal, ill thought through and not part of a broader strategy. It seems that HEIs are often unaware of, or are unwilling to exploit the possibilities open to them through such work. There appear to be multiple barriers, for example because of structures and traditions which make engagement difficult to achieve (e.g. INMAN/SCHUETZE 2010). The preoccupation in higher education with rankings has also played a role in discouraging engagement activity as some institutions seek to prioritise improving their ranking in league tables such as those of the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) which are almost exclusively based on research performance.

In this often less than encouraging climate, regions may themselves feel powerless to exploit the potential of having an HEI on their doorstep. Regional policy, by definition, is about place and community. Regional cities and communities develop their social and economic identity around place. They compete for business and economic development, infrastructure and services, and they promote and support local sporting, social and cultural organisations and activities. Increasingly they need to see local universities as assets for their communities, not only to provide accessible high quality educational opportunities, but also to contribute to local economic, social and cultural development. In these days of severely constrained public expenditure, they must strive to make the best of any assets within their region.

The implication is that both regions and HEIs could do more to come together to realise the potential impacts and benefits of regional engagement and that regions in particular can take the lead in driving the process forward. The stakes are high and the PURE international study shows that benefits for regions are established in both more developed and less developed countries world-wide, including both urban and rural areas (DUKE/OSBORNE/WILSON 2013)

6. Identifying the engagement gap

The PURE study has compared engagement practices of HEIs and regional authorities within 19 regions to identify the strengths and weaknesses of engagement within each region. The research reveals a regional engagement gap: a mis-match between HEI engagement and regional expectations and development priorities. Recognising the scope of the engagement gap is only the first step. This kind of analysis also forms the basis on which regions can formulate a set of expectations of HEIs and approach them with a view to establishing the kind of role they might play in securing benefits for regional development and improved efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of regional policy and services

7. Benchmarking engagement

Within the PURE study attempts were made to systematically analyse engagement profiles for HEIs using a benchmarking instrument based on an instrument first developed by CHARLES and BENNEWORTH (2002). The instrument can be used to provide a graphic representation profile of the strengths and weaknesses of engagement practice (rather than provide some overall measure of the quality of

engagement) in order to help partners and institutions decide on prioritisation and improvement. Benchmarking can be seen as part of a culture of self-improvement within an HEI and within a strategic discussion with regional partners (CHARLES et al. 2010, 82). It is based on the assumption that systematically collected data from different organisations or parts of organisations can be used comparatively to understand organisational strengths and weaknesses, and to identify aspects of performance in which change should be a priority.

The focus in the PURE study was on benchmarking a range of processes through which HEIs might seek to engage with regional stakeholders for mutual benefit. Following the approach developed by Charles et al., regions and HEIs within the PURE study were encouraged to benchmark their engagement practice across a number of domains which have been shown to be important for regional competitiveness. Whilst there is no universal agreement on these engagement domains, for the purposes of this study, 8 such domains were identified, namely:

- Embedding engagement in institutional practice
- Developing Human Capital
- Developing Business Processes and Innovation
- Developing Regional Learning Processes and Social Capital
- Community Development Processes
- Cultural Development
- Promoting Sustainability
- Enhancing regional infrastructure

The first of these is focussed on those processes within the institution which demonstrate commitment to engagement and through which engagement practice is promoted, embedded and supported, whilst the remainder relate to specific aspects of regional development. Each of these domains² has a number of specific aspects of engagement activity associated with it through which the engagement in that domain is operationalised.

The benchmarking process requires institutions to rate their practice on each aspect on a five-point scale, and offer a limited amount of quantitative data and supporting notes to indicate the scope, scale and quality of activity to justify the rating. The ratings can then be compared to produce a profile of engagement activity within each domain, and combined to provide an overall domain rating. The domain ratings can in turn be compared to provide an overall engagement profile for the institution across all domains. It is important to recognise that these are ratings, not precise measurements, although some expert moderation of ratings can be applied to improve comparability across institutions. However, what is important in the development of the profile is the relative strength of practice

across domains within each institution – the shape of the profile rather than the specific scores from which it is derived.

8. Comparing engagement profiles

Data from one regional study, Glasgow and the west of Scotland, illustrates the different profiles of engagement associated with the different categories of HEI identified above (for a full discussion of this study see <http://pure.pascalobservatory.org>). The HEIs in the west of Scotland study included a research intensive university, a regional intensive university and a relatively small specialist intensive university with a tradition for high quality vocational education. These are illustrated below. The study benchmarked regional engagement over a number of social, economic and cultural domains.

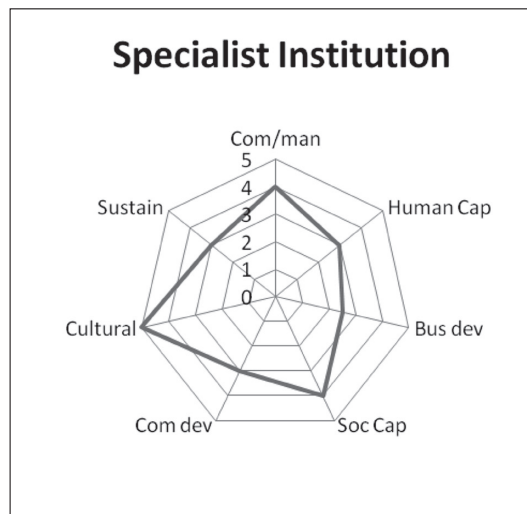


Figure 1 – Benchmarking Result in a Specialist Institution

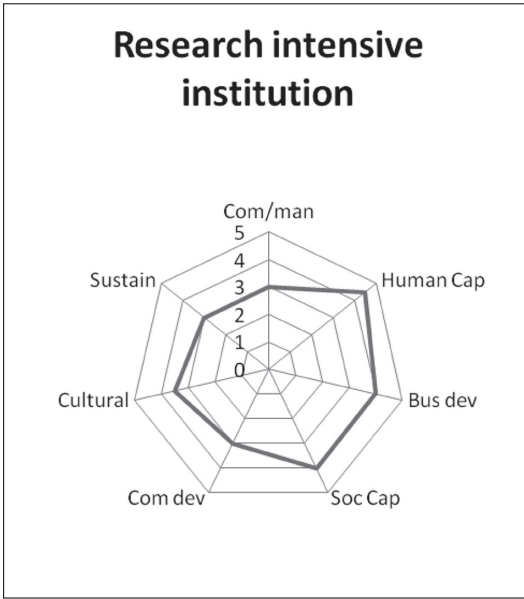


Figure 2 – Benchmarking Result in a Research-intensive Institution

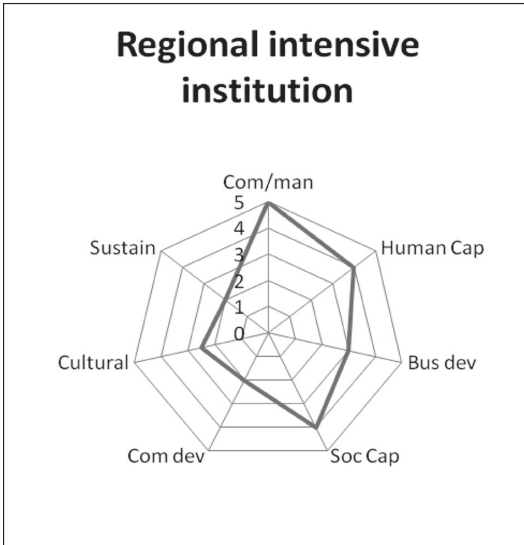


Figure 3– Benchmarking Result in a Regional Intensive Institution

In Figures 1–3 above, performance on each domain has been scored on a five-point scale, five representing good practice and one poor or un-developed practice. The allocated score is a judgement across performance on the various aspects of engagement activity – usually six or seven – associated with each, so a particular domain rating may be achieved through a varying combination of strengths and weaknesses on the more specific aspects of engagement associated with it.

It is stressed that these are self-rating scales which only give an indication of performance. The profiles provide a broad picture of the strengths and weaknesses of HEI practice, as a basis for discussion of ways performance might be improved to more readily meet the needs of both the universities and the regions. The results were also intended to make regional authorities more aware of any gaps in provision and as a consequence encourage them to seek more informed closer relationships with the HEIs in their localities.

9. Issues for HEIs and regions

The different engagement profiles in Glasgow and the West of Scotland raise a number of important issues of interest to regions keen to establish effective engagement between regional stakeholders and working relations with their local HEIs. Whilst all institutions demonstrated commitment to regional engagement in their mission and strategy statements, they varied considerably in the extent to which engagement activity was embedded in areas such as resource allocation and incentivised in staff assessment. Recognising that each HEI can play to its strengths should assist regional thinking about which partner to approach on particular development issues. It is also possible to identify some aspects of engagement which would be crucial to the fulfilment of the ‘regional intensive’ concept, and which might be held to mark the distinctiveness of the regional role. The region intensive concept for example requires that universities be close to their local economies and business communities.

A regional intensive university also needs to be both a regional actor and a ‘scientific’ actor, bringing advanced research and knowledge to local innovation processes. PEARCE et al. (2007) have argued the purpose and function of HEIs could extend beyond knowledge production and transfer to include the co-creation, exchange and mobilisation of knowledge through systematic approaches to community-university research partnerships, to the benefit of all. As KONVITZ (2011) has recently pointed out, because universities are uniquely not bounded by jurisdictional limits, they have the scope to bring otherwise disparate groups together to address issues of priority for the region, and may have a leadership role in taking the regional response forward.

10. Closing the engagement gap

Tackling the engagement gap requires clear appreciation on the part of the region as to the character of the relationship which is sought. Regions need to consider a number of key issues. How far along the continuum do regions wish to go in building a relationship with HEIs? Should the relationship be strategic or programme specific?

It is vital that any engagement partnership ‘takes two’. A fruitful partnership will depend on acknowledging the context in which each partner is operating, on leadership and commitment, and is likely to be sustained by both strategic discussion and practical demonstration of what can be achieved in specific programme applications. Regions should consider the kinds of contributions from HEIs they could expect in securing a wide range of policy objectives. These might be drawn from any of the engagement domains identified earlier, including city and regional planning, support to business, lifelong learning community development, heritage and culture, public health and well-being, and sustainability. In practical terms, examples of collaborative engagements found in the PURE study include:

- Enhancing available analytical capacity through jointly staffed analytical units
- Developing joint business incubation facilities
- Exploiting the knowledge capital in a region through knowledge-sharing and innovation arrangements
- Improved staff training programmes
- participation in student intern programmes and short-term ‘problem – solving’ placements
- Supporting HE-based continuing education programmes
- Trialling innovative service delivery models
- Following up international connections for the benefit of the local region.

11. Conclusion: regions ‘reaching in’ as well as universities ‘reaching out’

This article has explored the features of the profiles of engagement of HEIs and for the benefit of their potential regional partners has drawn attention to some issues that add value and give expression to HEIs’ ‘closeness’ to regional government, business and communities, consistent with their status as universities. It has been shown that all HEIs may have a role to play. HEIs are seen as important in regional development, and regional engagement is increasingly expected of them in justifying public funding. For regions the challenge must be to ‘join up’ the different contributions of HEIs for maximum impact.

Business and regional policy makers often complain that ‘getting in’ to what HEIs have to offer is never easy. This requires clarity about what is sought and determination to establish innovative partnership activities to secure the benefits required and expected. From a regional perspective, the study in the West of Scotland and similar findings from the PASCAL international programme provide regions with clear appreciation of the character of the relationships they should seek with HEIs. The contention is that it is time for regions to use this knowledge to ‘reach in’ to HEIs and seek out solutions to the issues they face. With clarity about what is sought, and determination to establish innovative partnership activities to secure the benefits required and expected, closing the engagement gap wherever it exists will bring benefits for regions, HEIs and wider society at large.

Notes

- 1 The Big Tent is a Global Alliance of international networks concerned with university engagement with communities. See <http://pobs.cc/msu2> for its most recent communique.
- 2 A full listing of the domains and their associated aspects can be found at <http://pure.pascalobservatory.org>

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Biographical notes

Dr. Robert Hamilton is a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Open Studies, University of Glasgow. He co-ordinates the University of Glasgow programme of adult and continuing education short courses and events for the public which each year attracts 5,000 students. His research interests include aspects of the history of adult education in Scotland and America, Learning Cities, and regional engagement of HEIs. He is an Affiliate of the PASCAL International Observatory.

Professor Mike Osborne is Professor of Adult and Lifelong Learning, School of Education, University of Glasgow and experienced in adult education, VET and Higher Education research, development and evaluation. He is Director of the Centre for Research and Development in Adult and Lifelong Learning and is Co-director of the PASCAL International Observatory. He co-ordinates the PASCAL study of universities and regional engagement

(PURE) in 17 regions around the world. His many research activities include current projects being undertaken for the EC on lifelong learning for transition in mid-life and innovation in HE.

Mr. John Tibbitt is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow and Co-Vice Chair (Policy) of the PASCAL International Observatory. He is an experienced social researcher who has undertaken and managed programmes of research for policy in university, local government and central government settings. His recent research and consultancy activities have included the areas of lifelong learning, regeneration, neighbourhoods and schools, and social capital.

Adresses: Dr. *Robert Hamilton*, Centre for Open Studies, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G3 6NH, Scotland, e.-mail: Robert.Hamilton@glasgow.ac.uk