The regulatory policies for higher education in mauritius and its contibution to ...

Higher Education Policies in the Emergence of Two Knowledge Hubs: Mauritius and Malaysia Introduction Becoming a knowledge hub would mean a concentration of development in the education sector in such a way that mastery would be the desired primary effect resulting to the improvement of economy as a whole. In Mauritius, investing on human capital and trainings on technical skills would be their primary target in realizing the goals of becoming a center of knowledge while expansion of education is Malaysia's action towards becoming a knowledge hub. Given the government plans of these two developing countries, internationalization of education would not seem impossible; where the target is to create internationally competitive educational systems and increasing economic productivity. Mauritius is no longer just a country in the Pacific since they have adapted to the internalization of education followed by the opening of the local economy to the international market. It all began with the country's involvement of the internationalization of education which " has forced Mauritius to adopt an economic rationale of creating higher education institution…– to foster economic and social development" (Ogachi, 2008). The dream of becoming a knowledge hub stems from the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC) Strategic Plan for 2007-2011. The plan concentrates on meeting the demands of globalisation and " rapid technological progress" (TEC, 2007, p. 1). In order to fully realize this plan, it is " necessary to increase… expenditure for tertiary education and Research & Development" (Ministry of Education, n. d., p. iv). Aligned with the TEC's action plan, the Mauritius government has used strategies to attract foreign students to study in their country. As stated in the policy context, the strategy is to create a conducive

learning environment so as to raise enrollment from roughly 7% to 30% (SAURA, 2008). In the last five years, Mauritius is slowly becoming a center for knowledge. A recent concept of called " Cyber Island" is another step of the government of becoming a knowledge hub. The government centers on the improvement of the ICT skills of the students as " a pillar for economic growth" (Gewer, 2005, p. 48). Nowadays, the government is on move in making the third publicly funded university so that more Mauritians would have access to education. Malaysia, on the other hand, is currently fighting against inaccessibility of quality education. In a report by Lek (2010), " only 29. 9% of Malaysians have access to higher education." The root of the problem is the expensive tertiary education. As a resolution, the government spends RM 8. 5 billion a year to subsidise the expenses of these institutions. Part of the extension is the Malaysian government's plans to put up an EduCity; a 129-hectare property composed of eight universities; the first phase of government resolution (Sawahel, 2009). This project encourages cross boarder education, which was started by the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus. The second phase would include the development of courses in the language, fine arts, and multimedia disciplines. Furthermore, the so-called apex universities are given the autonomy for them " to focus on becoming the very best" (Chapman, Chew, & Tan, 2007). The very concept of Malaysia's EduCity and Mauritius's Cyber Island are effects of globalization of education. The commodification of higher education benefits the economy but has counter-effects in learning. According to Naidoo (2007), commodifying higher education " ha[s] propelled universities to function less as institutions... and more as producers of commodities" (as cited in Sirat &

Kaur, 2007). It can be noted that higher education prioritizes economy rather than improve education in the light of knowledge hubs. Conclusion Both Malaysia and Mauritius's plan of becoming knowledge hubs is a form of using education for economic benefits. In order to meet the national interests of education and better economy, both plans should meet the demands of both international and foreign market. Strengthening local universities, intensifying training education for vocational courses and adding to the plan of knowledge hub, may solve this gap. References Chapman, K., Chew, S., Tan, E. L., 2007. Transforming higher education. The Star Online, [Online] 2 Sept. Available at: http://thestar. com. my/education/story. asp? file=/2007/9/2/education/18725014 [Accessed 26 January 2011]. Gewer, A., 2005. Mauritius: ' the Singapore of Africa? Skills for a global island. In Akoojee, S., Gewer, A., & McGrath, S., eds., 2005. Vocational and education training in Southern Africa: a comparative study. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Lek, K. V., 2010. Expensive race to higher education. [Online] 10 Jul. Available at: http://educationmalaysia. blogspot. com/2010/07/state-of-higher-education-in-malaysia. html [Accessed 26 January 2011]. Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, n. d. Developing Mauritius into a knowledge hub and a center of higher learning. [Online] Available at: http://www. gov. mu/portal/goc/educationsite/file/knowhub. pdf [Accessed 31 January 2011]. Ogachi, O., 2008. Higher education in africa: the international dimension. In D. Tefarra & J. Knight, eds. 2008. African higher education in the context of internationalization: altruistic partnerships or global academic pillage. [e-book] Available at: http://www. crasc. org/IMG/ARB%20Pdf/African %20Higher%20Education.... pdf [Accessed 31 January 2011]. Sawahel, W.,

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