

## BOOK REVIEW

***Transforming Higher Education in Africa and Asia: Strategic Planning and Policy* by Fred M. Hayward (2020). Albany, New York: SUNY Press.**Reviewed by Patrick Swanzy<sup>i</sup>

In his career as a specialist in higher education, Fred Hayward has authored many scientific papers in the field. However, none is more insightful as *Transforming Higher Education in Africa and Asia: Strategic Planning and Policy*. Unlike other authors who shy away from writing about issues of the developing and the underdeveloped world, he resists the temptation and offer a thought-provoking discussion on strategic planning in higher education in these contexts. Backed with data from higher education systems in countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan in Asia and Ghana, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Madagascar, Uganda and Malawi, he explores efforts to improve lives by building high-quality higher education in these countries as they face a variety of difficult challenges. The author interestingly notes that responses to these challenges, be it from political figures or institutional leaders, are often creative, sometimes exceptional, and frequently suggestive of mechanisms higher education stakeholders might find helpful. He further demonstrates with some cases why strategic planning is so important for successful higher education change and transformation. He notes that, while each of these cases is unique, there are some general lessons they suggest about both the successes and challenges for higher education change.

What is intriguing about this book is that the author unpacks strategic planning in higher education in fourteen comprehensive chapters. The book's first chapter focuses on the critical role high-quality higher education plays in national development. The author cautions that failure to focus on improving the quality of higher education puts underdeveloped and developing countries farther and farther behind the developed nations of the world year after year. He then prescribes strategic planning as one of the powerful routes to transformation and to ensure that change is tied to providing high-quality programmes that are relevant to employment or foster entrepreneurship by graduates.

In chapter two, the author discusses prelude to planning in higher education and details the overview of the case studies. Citing Bloom et al., 2011, he recounts that the 1960s and 1970s saw a period of neglect and often decay in much of Africa and parts of South Asia with the GDP largely stagnant in South Asia during this period, then falling after that. He concludes that this resulted in most of Africa and much of South Asia suffering from economic and political crises, having a profound effect on the well-being of citizens and funding for higher education.

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The author focuses on Pakistan in chapter three. He diagnoses the impetus for the transformation of higher education as emerging from a number of factors, including being way behind in quality compared to India. The author asserts that the plans for the change were captured in the Medium Term Development Framework, and had four main goals: increased access; improved quality; infrastructure upgrading; and a focus on relevance. He praises the budget-making process in Pakistan as a good model of what should be done in conjunction with planning major changes in higher education, but sadly expresses that, with President Musharraf no longer in office, the plan suffered a major setback.

In chapter four, the writer shifts his attention to Afghanistan by suggesting that the motivation for the strategic plan was the general recognition of the disastrous state of higher education due to the war. He notes that Deputy Minister Babury began thinking about the strategic plan and involved other major stakeholders of education. He mentions that even though there were initial challenges, the plan was a remarkably successful effort, resulting in transformation of the system in major ways. The author concludes by inferring that the Afghanistan case demonstrates that fundamental change is possible even in a war environment.

In chapters five and six, the author argues that no country has sought to make as extensive a range of transformational changes in higher education as South Africa has. He proffers that at the forefront of demands for change was outrage over apartheid education policy, which had restricted access to education for black students. He demonstrates with examples from national and the University of Fort Hare, University of the North, and Peninsula Technikon, that though the plan faced initial challenges, the consultation process that led to the changes was amongst the most remarkable experienced anywhere.

The author mentions in chapter seven that Sierra Leone's higher education change efforts started out with a thoughtful plan and modest budget put together by a team from the Midwestern Universities Consortium and higher education leaders of the country with the support of President Momoh. He claims the plan had a well-prepared budget, with each item in the plan costed. The author sadly mentions that a coup d'état ended the government of President Momoh that had initiated the higher education rehabilitation and development effort. He concludes that this situation has negatively impacted the country's higher education system that has since struggled to recover.

Chapter eight is headed 'Fostering higher education change in Uganda'. The author notes that the Uganda Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2003–2015 had five main goals: enhancing quality and relevance; increasing equity and access; achieving efficiency and effectiveness; improving governance; and preventing HIV/AIDS. Well spelt out key performance indicators allow key stakeholders to measure implementation success. Though this suggested hope, the author laments that there was no unanimity about the funding strategies within the higher education community and left the sought changes largely unrealised.

In chapter nine, the author discusses the higher education change efforts in Madagascar. As noted in the previous chapters, political figures are crucial in facilitating strategic plans. In the case of Madagascar, the strategic planning process was initiated by Minister Haja Nirina Razafinjatovo. The author reveals that the process started in 2005, but was plagued by

several challenges. The chapter portrays that Madagascar's higher education began to revive in 2006 after a long neglect, however, this was short lived as the country experienced a coup. The author concludes that the proper functioning of an education system is dependent on many factors, but that political stability is key amongst them.

The book's chapter ten focuses on building transformational change at the University for Development Studies in Ghana. The author notes that the leaders of the university started an agenda for major change through their strategic plan underpinned by a "pro-poor" philosophy. He concludes that what is noteworthy in terms of fostering change was the success of people at the university in mobilising the local communities in a new kind of partnership that helped link rural Ghana to higher education in important ways that enhanced the education process.

The eleventh chapter of the book discusses the University of Malawi's (UNIMA) coalition and team building for effective change. The author asserts that coalition and team building are essential for successful strategic planning, either prior to starting the strategic planning project or at the very outset to ensure there is broad consensus on the goals for change, the process, priorities, and implementation. The author acknowledges that the successful changes that took place at UNIMA were in many respects a product of exceptional leadership.

Chapter twelve presents strategic planning challenges at Kabul Polytechnic University (KPU) which has suffered substantial war damage following the Russian invasion and Taliban rule. The author emphasises that the objectives of the KPU strategic plan are: to build up the capacity of faculty members; to improve the quality of teaching and learning; and to increase opportunities to promote science based on the recent developments in science and technology. He concluded the chapter by advising that the introduction of a strategic plan written in a captivating style is very important and has the potential to attract funding.

In chapters thirteen and fourteen, the author discusses leadership and transformational change in developing countries. The author notes that the examined higher education transformation cases involve a wide range of leadership experiences, in some cases as the initiators of change, as the facilitators of strategic plans, the actual planners, the mobilisers of support, or as the implementers. The author points out that in a few cases such as Pakistan and Ghana successful change was the result of the work of a few leaders, while in most cases it was a collective effort at many levels and involved broad mobilisation of people in support of the strategic plan within the university and/or higher education community such as Malawi. The author acknowledges that successful leaders' strategies geared towards change are either conscious or unconscious.

Fred Hayward's book is a masterpiece and a groundbreaking contribution to strategic planning in higher education and will be valuable to stakeholders of higher education.

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