



The U.S. Community College Model: Potential for Applications in India

Prepared for the 2013 U.S.-India
Higher Education Dialogue

Sponsored by
The Embassy of the United States of America in India
Institute of International Education (IIE)



Institute of International Education (IIE)

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I. FOREWORD

BY NANCY J. POWELL



I am honored to introduce this paper on community college partnerships, published on the occasion of the U.S.-India Higher Education Dialogue, held in New Delhi in June 2013. Education cooperation between the U.S. and India forms an important part of the foundation of relations between our two peoples, cutting across all fields of engagement. We cooperate on a wide range of education initiatives—from research collaboration to teacher training, from curriculum development to student exchange—and that cooperation is growing. I'm convinced that increased collaboration in these areas leads to greater understanding and increased prosperity for both our nations.

Recently we began looking at a new area of cooperation: skills development education, a key focus area for the education sector in both India and the U.S. Our education sectors strive to equip young people with the skills they need to compete globally and in new fields. In the U.S. the community college system is where much of that training is done. Rooted in community needs and working with local industry, these institutions have been able to produce graduates with immediately applicable skills. India is also increasingly focused on providing such training. We are exploring ways in which the model can be adapted to meet the huge demand of Indian students for higher education and realize the full potential of the youth dividend.

The U.S. Government and the American education community enthusiastically support India's interest in exploring the community college model. As we work on this issue, we will learn from each other. I look forward to finding solutions that take our partnership on the community college model, and in our overall educational ties, to the next level.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy J. Powell".

Ambassador Nancy J. Powell
Ambassador to India from the United States of America

II. EDITOR'S NOTE

BY NAMRATA JHA

This IIE White Paper, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in India, was developed in advance of the Higher Education Dialogue to be held on June 25, 2013 in New Delhi, India. Among other topics, workforce development and continued India-U.S. higher education collaboration will be key issues for discussion. This paper presents Indian and U.S. perspectives on the implementation of the U.S. community college model in India and the opportunities for community colleges to help meet the workforce needs of the local communities and propel the world's third largest economy.

This paper consists of three sections, the first of which—*The U.S. Community College as a Model for Global Higher Education Systems*, is authored by Mary Beth Hartenstine, Program Manager, Community Colleges for International Development, and provides a broad overview of the internationalization of U.S. community colleges and global interest in the American community college model.

In the second section—*Applying the U.S. Community College Model to India: Indian Perspectives*, authors describe the opportunities and challenges for community colleges in India. Specifically, B. S. Panwar, Director of M.S. Panwar Community College, recounts the evolution of community colleges in India and their contribution to vocational education in the country. Next, Xavier Alphonse, Director of the Indian Center for Research and Development of Community Education, describes the deliberate way Indian leaders adapted the U.S. community college to meet India's needs. To round out this section, Murli Nagasundaram and Duleep Deosthale of Manipal Global Education Services address the shortcomings of the existing Indian higher education system and the profound way a well-designed, country-wide community college system could advance India's economic growth.

Authors of the third section—*Applying the U.S. Community College Model to India: U.S. Perspectives*, share best practices for expanding the U.S. community college model to India. In a personal essay, Edward Valeau, Former Superintendent President of Hartnell Community College, shares his observations of the Indian community college system as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar to the country in 2003. Rahul Choudaha, Director of Research and Strategic Development at World Education Services, provides a framework for community college establishments in India and Barry Bannister, Director of International Development, Green River Community College (GRCC), presents case study of GRCC's partnership with Bellefonte Community College (BCC) in Shillong, Meghalaya.

I hope these observations and best practices will inspire continued dialogue to strengthen workforce development and educational mobility in India and foster future partnerships between U.S. and Indian community colleges.

Namrata Jha
Director, Institute of International Education (IIE) India

III. THE U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGE AS A MODEL FOR GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

The Internationalized Community College Serves “Glocal” Stakeholders

Mary Beth Hartenstine, Program Manager, Community Colleges for International Development

Introduction

As India looks globally for ideas about solving its own higher education gaps related to its capacity to educate large numbers of youth, as well as availability of relevant and flexible technical training programs, it will certainly pick and choose the elements from global models that will work best within its own context. There is no one-size-fits-all model. Even in the United States, there is great variation in how community colleges are structured and governed, what types of programs they offer and their approaches to education. However, community colleges can offer lessons to India, and other countries looking at this system, about what makes the U.S. model successful. While sharing these lessons, U.S. community colleges can also learn new lessons and introduce new elements into their existing model.

Community College Internationalization and Global Interest in the Community College Model

U.S. community colleges have historically been identified as prospective models by countries addressing gaps in their education systems. Much of the interest in community colleges internationally has centered on their role in workforce training and, more recently, on the concept of transfer missions, open access and flexible educational pathways. While there is a perception that U.S. community colleges are newcomers to the area of international engagement, the reality is that community colleges have been engaged in creating training programs or developing new college systems abroad since the mid-1970s. Community Colleges for International Development (CCID) and its member colleges have been engaged in such capacity-building efforts since 1976.

The appeal of the community college model and its adoption in over 30 countries has been documented.¹ It is true, however, that this type of international engagement was not widespread across the 1,200-plus community colleges in the U.S. As the forces of globalization began affecting community colleges directly, they responded in various ways.² There is increasing recognition among community colleges that the definition of the local community they serve is changing. This recognition may be due to demographic changes in the local service area to reflect a more globally mobile society, or it may be because of local industries with global business ties. It also reflects the realization by college leadership

¹ One comprehensive source is *Community College Models: Globalization and Higher Education Reform*, Rosalind Latiner Raby and Edward J. Valeau (Eds.), (Springer, 2009).

² The Spring 2013 edition of *New Directions for Community Colleges, The Community College in a Global Context*, offers a wealth of information for those looking to understand the changing role of community colleges in a globalized era and advances in internationalization at U.S. community colleges.

and faculty that their graduates will be better able to compete wherever they go if they have a globally contextualized educational experience.

Because of this more widespread recognition among community colleges of the need to internationalize, CCID has recently developed a System for Comprehensive Internationalization (SCI), which promotes capacity building, knowledge sharing, benchmarking and recognition specific to the community college sector.³ It is intended to be used both by U.S. community colleges to meet internationalization objectives, and by institutions abroad that are structured similarly to the U.S. community college. The system and related tools are distinct from other internationalization resources that are intended for higher education institutions more generally. The institutional analysis portion of the system (framework tool) categorizes elements of institutional development to determine how and where the global perspective has been incorporated, and allows colleges to determine what they value in the context of internationalizing the college.

Today, community colleges, as with other higher education institutions around the globe, are instituting strategic objectives involving internationalization and are finding new paths to achieve these objectives. One such path is engaging in international development work. In the context of higher education, development work often involves capacity building at partner institutions in a developing country, which in turn helps countries address various development challenges. These include issues such as youth unemployment, poverty, agricultural production, public health and sustainable natural resources management. In the case of community colleges, much of the work has centered on providing training, consultation, curriculum and program development, resources and professional development opportunities in relevant disciplines and technologies.

Community colleges are well-positioned to engage in development work, perhaps more so than other higher education institutions, because of their flexibility, adaptability and inclusive vision. Their focus on practical skills and training for the workplace combined with theoretical knowledge also makes them well-suited for development projects. The hands-on approach is typically what is needed by institutions trying to implement new systems and strategies. Put another way, “This high-level local engagement and dedication – coupled with flexible governance systems that emphasize local autonomy and management flexibility – enables a community college to identify and respond quickly to local concerns and to get rapid feedback on the quality and effectiveness of its activities.”⁴ As partners in development projects abroad, community colleges will bring this perspective and experience to bear in development projects, ask questions and look for solutions that utilize such strategies.

These same characteristics have also made the community college model attractive to other countries as they seek to improve and expand economic development opportunities. The community college imperative to be connected and responsive to the local economy is one of the keys to its success. In order for the U.S.-style community college model to truly be implemented elsewhere, it must retain these key elements. New institutions must be supported by an engaged community and by business investment. They must also retain the mission of providing access broadly across society and generate an educational pathway with multiple completion points to allow entry into the workforce and for individuals to attain long-term education and career goals. Many countries outside the U.S. have

³ SCI information can be found at <https://programs.ccid.cc/cci/sites/default/files/SCI-final-web.pdf>

⁴ Shumaker, John W. “U.S. Community Colleges and a Response to the Arab Spring,” p. 123. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, no. 161, Spring 2013 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

institutions called community colleges, but they do not necessarily retain these features, and therefore may not be the effective tools the governments of those countries had hoped for in addressing workforce and other development challenges. The autonomy and flexibility of higher education in the United States, and within community colleges specifically, is not something easily changed in other countries and contexts, and will be a key challenge as the U.S. model continues to be vetted and experimented with abroad.

International Development Partnerships

In order for individual colleges to delve into partnerships with similar institutions abroad, clear benefits for both partners are necessary. Broadly speaking, colleges will cite the main benefit of becoming engaged in a project (such as capacity building at institutions abroad) as the contribution it makes to the U.S. institution's own internationalization initiatives. For community colleges, it is also critical for these incentives to be tied to the local stakeholders and for the college to bring new global opportunities back to the local communities they serve, thus realizing a "glocal" vision. In a recent article, Highline Community College President Jack Bermingham described how local business and industry benefitted from the college's partnerships with Namibia and South Africa and how Highline also benefitted: "These relationships offered further examples of the globalization of higher education and its role in advancing economic development and international trade. The college's value to its business community in providing an entrée to influential decision makers in southern Africa heightened Highline's opportunities."⁵ The cases below also illustrate this key point about ensuring partnerships are beneficial for global and local stakeholders.

Case Studies

Highline Community College and Eastern Iowa Community College (EICC) are both engaged in development projects in the Middle East funded through Higher Education for Development (HED) in cooperation with U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Both colleges have a history of working in the field of international development with institutions around the world, including those in Namibia, South Africa, India, Republic of Georgia and Thailand, primarily with funding from HED or USAID.

EICC has two projects currently funded through HED. The first is collaboration with Al Quds College in Jordan to develop strategies for faculty recruitment, retention and professional development. The partnership also plans to engage students by creating an Institute for Future Entrepreneurs Exchange (IFEE), which will provide vocational education and technical training linked to employment for Jordanian and American students. The IFEE also will contribute to the development of research in business and entrepreneurship. The second project with Sana'a Community College in Yemen will establish a foundation for an entrepreneurship certificate across the career and technical education curriculum.

Highline Community College and Mataria Technical College in Egypt have been working together on teaching innovation at Mataria and on developing connections between curriculum and local business and industry needs. They are partnering to open a Center for Vocational Certification and Teaching

⁵ Bermingham, Jack and Ryan, Margaret, "Transforming International Education through Institutional Capacity Building." p, 63. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, no. 161, Spring 2013 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

Innovation (CVCTI), which will provide industry recognized credentials for current students, graduates and community members, and serve as a center for faculty and administrator professional development. Another goal of the project is for the Center to lead the process of infusing entrepreneurial concepts into Mataria's curriculum by incorporating knowledge gained from access to local businesses and industries.

When HED announced the availability of funds for vocational and technical institutions in the broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) region and U.S. community colleges to collaboratively develop proposals for long-term partnerships, U.S. community colleges found it challenging to find an appropriate partner in the Middle East. EICC met its future partners through networking opportunities at one of CCID's annual conferences. Sana'a Community College and Al Quds College both attended the conference in 2009 and afforded EICC the opportunity to establish the basis of a working relationship. In the case of Highline, the partnership with Mataria came about as a result of prior involvement in a capacity-building project with technical colleges in Egypt funded by U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Highline is currently engaged in a similar professional training program for Indonesian faculty and administrators. Though both these projects (Egypt and Indonesia) were funded by ECA, which is typically focused on diplomacy and exchange programs, both projects also focused on development and capacity-building.

Both colleges noted numerous challenges involved in the BMENA projects, ranging from barriers in communication and visa approvals, to frequent staff turn-over, to challenges in creating buy-in at all levels, not to mention revolutions in both Egypt and Yemen. And there is the matter of finding U.S. college staff interested in traveling to this region of the world. It is certainly a lot easier to find a faculty member willing to lead a study abroad trip to Rome than it is to find someone willing to travel to Cairo in the midst of a revolution.

However, both Highline and Eastern Iowa were quick to name the positive impacts for the colleges as a result of engaging in this type of work, especially faculty professional development. For Highline, engaging in development work helps meet the goal of becoming a culturally competent and global college, which the institution sees as a core value. This is not necessarily the case for all community colleges. Highline is located just south of Seattle, in a racially and ethnically diverse area, and is also in the center of an important location for international trade. For these reasons, graduating culturally competent students is an important goal for the college and to do this they must also ensure they have culturally competent faculty. Capacity-building projects that either send Highline faculty abroad or bring international colleagues to Highline's campus are key to achieving this goal. Eastern Iowa views this work as a way to build its own capacity and develop strengths in areas where it had weaknesses. For example, the projects are giving the school the opportunity to develop an entrepreneurship curriculum. The Institute for Future Entrepreneurs Exchange (IFEE) will benefit both Jordanian and American students. In the long term, EICC expects the HED project to result in a study abroad program to Jordan.

Daytona State College (DSC) has also recently been involved in a series of international development projects. In 2006 the college was awarded a \$1.7 million multi-year contract to work in cooperation with the Dominican Republic to develop a community college in Eastern Santo Domingo. Similarly, in 2007 Daytona State was awarded a \$1.1 million contract to restructure and reposition the Bahamas Technical Vocational Institute to model a U.S. community college. Finally, in 2010 Daytona State was awarded a contract to perform an analysis of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system of Barbados. Each of these projects was funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and required

campus-wide cooperation to meet the targeted outcomes. These projects required sending faculty and staff members abroad to develop curriculum, train faculty, gather data and share best practices. Not only did the college's involvement in these projects contribute to the increased capacity of each of these nations to develop a trained workforce, they also provided college personnel an opportunity for professional development.

In 2012, Daytona State's institutional outcomes were revised to include one focused on cultural literacy. This outcome is designed to ensure students understand the impact of the variations among and within cultures, and the college has refocused its international efforts on the students.

Daytona had several motivations for engaging in development activities. First, the college initiated a capacity building effort to foster participation in development efforts off-shore, including professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. More than 100 members were involved in the Dominican Republic and Bahamas projects. These professional development opportunities came at a time when college funds for such activities were diminished or non-existent. The contracts provided an additional revenue stream for the college through the overhead costs built into the contract, more than \$800,000 over three years. The contracts also paid salaries and for supplies and other costs associated with the projects.

These projects also provided opportunities for curriculum development, study abroad and faculty and staff exchanges. The Bahamas project ended with the institution involved becoming more like a community college. The community college in the Dominican Republic was inaugurated in July 2012.

The Caribbean constitutes a major trading partner for Florida, which has been supportive of these types of projects. The state-legislated Florida Caribbean Institute, co-located at DSC and Florida International University, encourages connections between the state and the region. Its goal is to promote and expand commercial, cultural, and educational linkages between Florida and the Caribbean.

As part of the effort to strengthen ties with the Americas, DSC has participated in four North American Mobility in Higher Education grants in the fields of computer engineering electronics, hospitality management and green technology (DSC's most current grant), and hosted a scholar-in-residence program from Brazil to straighten ties and develop more capacity in that region.

Issues for Consideration in Development Work

The international development community and higher education institutions working in this capacity now recognize that in order to be successful, development work must be a mutually beneficial partnership, not simply a transfer of knowledge, supplies or technology. Justifying an institution's participation in such a project calls for the institution to demonstrate to its own stakeholders how the project benefits the institution and meets its mission and vision. In some cases, this is fairly easy, as in the examples described above; however, if the benefits cannot be clearly and convincingly articulated to leadership and other stakeholders, it is not likely the right time and place for such a partnership.

International development projects do not necessarily yield these benefits quickly. They can be extremely time-consuming, in part because the success of such projects often relies upon trust and personal relationships. It takes time and persistence to do this type of work. Lasting results are often not seen by the time the funding stream ends. Partners who are truly committed to seeing positive change need to find ways to make projects sustainable and be willing to extend them for years. Leadership

instability may also cause setbacks. Colleges need to be prepared for delays and additional hurdles, as in the cases mentioned in this article, and in countries experiencing societal and political turmoil. In addition, colleges need to have people willing to go the countries. Development work is often not in the most glamorous countries and can involve safety concerns. Without faculty or staff passionate about the project, it is not likely to succeed.

When looking at larger scale, transformative projects, such as those expected to take place in India, U.S. colleges should look to partner through a consortium to alleviate some of the possible burdens of these global development projects. Involving multiple colleges in a project can make engagement in development work more manageable and less taxing on an institution's resources and staff. As noted at the outset, one college cannot be the perfect model for an entire system and one system (such as the U.S. community college system) cannot be transplanted wholly to an outside context. However, there are aspects of individual colleges, such as particular programs, administrative systems, or strategies for work-based learning that can be replicated. By working through a consortium of colleges, appropriate programs and individuals can be called upon depending on contextual needs of the international partner, which will result in more meaningful and sustainable partnerships.

Mary Beth Hartenstine is a Program Manager with Community Colleges for International Development (CCID). She has many years of experience in both international higher education programs and in the non-profit management field. She has a BA in Political Science and Environmental Studies from the University of Pennsylvania and a MA in Arab Studies from Georgetown University. She has studied, live, and traveled in the Middle East, including spending one year on a fellowship to study Arabic at the American University of Cairo. She has worked on the Community College Initiative (CCI) Program for five years. The author would like to thank the following people for their contributions to the article: Don Matthews (CCID); John Brady (Daytona State College); Kathleen Hasselblad (Highline Community College); and Jeremy Pickard (Eastern Iowa Community Colleges).

IV. APPLYING THE U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGE MODEL TO INDIA: INDIAN PERSPECTIVES

The Indian Community College System: Developing Vocational Education in India

B.S. Panwar, Director, M.S. Panwar Community College

Over the years, the community college movement in India has become a national phenomenon. Although the concept of the community college has not really been accepted by the Indian educational community as such, it has created its own history over the past two decades. At present, there are more than 500 community colleges in about 22 states and union territories that provide education to empower the disadvantaged and the underprivileged, including the urban, rural and tribal poor and women. In India, community colleges have a major role to play because – in collaboration with local industries and the community—they help students attain skills that lead to gainful employment.

History

Since 1995, Indian community colleges have developed as vibrant institutions of higher education that offer educational programs at the post-secondary school level. Indian community colleges are inspired by the system in the United States, where it is a successful model of vertical and horizontal movement of students into the university system. The Indian Center for Research and Development of Community Education (ICRDCE), Chennai (under the leadership of Dr. Xavier Alphonse) has worked since 1998 to ensure that the government acknowledges and confirms the importance of community colleges. ICRDCE has also worked to persuade the UPA government to include community colleges in the goals of the Common Minimum Program. (The following article by Dr. Alphonse describes the role of ICRDCE in more detail.)

Another major step in the establishment of the community college system came when the National Knowledge Commission reported that the system of affiliated colleges for undergraduate education, which may have been fine five decades ago, is no longer adequate. The Commission suggested four steps for improvement in the system: First, colleges need economy, either as individual colleges or as clusters of colleges, based on established criteria. Second, affiliated colleges should be redesigned to provide both vocational and formal education. Third, the Central Board of Undergraduate Education, along with the State Boards of Undergraduate Education, should set curricula and conduct examinations for affiliated undergraduate colleges. These boards would separate academic from administrative functions and provide quality benchmarks. Finally, they would establish new undergraduate colleges as community colleges and affiliate them with the Central Board of Undergraduate Education, State Boards of Undergraduate Education or a new or existing university.

Differentiators

Many people ask how the Indian community college system differs from the two existing vocational systems—Industrial Technical Institutes and the Polytechnics. The difference lies in the fact that collegiate level vocational education offers only apprenticeship training and vocationalization of the first-degree level, whereas community colleges offer a range of multi-focused programs in occupational,

technical and continuing education designed to meet the workforce needs of the regions where the colleges are located. Community colleges also offer “bridge” courses to complete higher certifications, ensure employability and competency of the individual trained, teach life skills and communication in English, and provide training in personal, social, language, communication and creative skills. Indian community colleges focus on three main components: information (30 percent), attitude (40 percent) and skills (30 percent). A major milestone in the Indian community college system was in 2005 when the Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU) recognized 67 Community colleges as Vocational Program Centers (VPCs). In 2005-06, 4,711 students studied in various vocational programs leading to skills development and job placements.

Developing Vocational Education

The ICRDCE, under the guidance of Dr. Xavier Alphonse, succeeded in influencing the state and central governments to recognize and accredit the system. Consequently, the issue of accreditation was examined by National Institute of Open Schooling, New Delhi, at the direction of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India and accredited 18 community colleges. Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai not only recognized 105 community colleges in Tamil Nadu but also extended recognition to community colleges in other states. The Tenth Five Year Plan recognized the concept of community in its statement, “there should be a focus on convergence of schemes like the ‘*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*’, Adult Education and Vocational Education Program at schools; that is, polytechnics, community colleges, etc.” (Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002-07, p. 51). The community college movement was duly recognized when it was included in the working paper of the MHRD and when the University Grants Commission (UGC) requested that planning Commission add the community college as a scheme in the Tenth Five Year Plan. The request was accepted and an additional budget for community colleges was included in the plan. In addition, the chairman of the UGC appointed a National Committee on Community Colleges, headed by Dr. Alphonse. The National Committee included 125 representatives from 91 community colleges and received suggestions and recommendations for future action. Two meetings with the state governments of Tamil Nadu and Haryana activated approval of local community colleges. In May 2007, the Secretary of Education, the Government of Tamil Nadu, the Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Open University and Dr. Alphonse met to implement the designs.

In March, 2008, the Distance Education Council came forward to provide accreditation to Open Universities and created a community college system to provide higher education to school dropouts. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) organized a two-day meeting of vice chancellors from 12 Open Universities to discuss the concept of community colleges. The UGC chairman, the vice-chairman of All India Council for Technical Education, the deputy secretary of MHRD and Dr. Alphonse, along with the vice president and faculty members from Montgomery Community College (Maryland) met to implement the new designs. After a great deal of groundwork, Professor Rajashekar Pillai, then vice chancellor of IGNOU-New Delhi launched the IGNOU Community College Scheme in July 2009. Realizing that the major contribution of the community colleges in different parts of the world has been to extend access to post-secondary studies for millions of students who would otherwise not have the desired opportunity, the Indian community colleges were considered to be institutions “for the community; by the community and of the community”, offering educational opportunities to all sections of the society, particularly the marginalized and the disadvantaged.

Bringing the University to the Community

As such, the main goal of the IGNOU Community College plan was to bring the university to the community. The plan included continuous and end-of-term (periodic) assessments. These were comprised of all necessary components like theory, practical, project, fieldwork, internship, etc. It included a mechanism for establishing linkages with industry and prospective employers and provided lifelong learning opportunities necessary for the creation of an educated workforce with flexible entry and exit norms. Accordingly, academic programs (Certificate/Diploma/Associate Degree Programs) were developed based on a community needs analysis to prepare students for opportunities in the community. The scheme uniquely had the capacity to provide academic programs that are generally not offered through the conventional system of education, but for which there is demonstrated need. The IGNOU Community College Cell worked hard to develop a well-administered system, and mandated the creation of regulatory bodies like the Community College Board, the Academic Committee and the Examination Committee.

Challenges

By July 2011, more than 540 community colleges in different parts of the country registered under the IGNOU Community College Scheme and approximately 50,000 students were enrolled in 2,358 different programs of study. In addition, the existing community colleges in Tamil Nadu have an impressive record of 75 percent job placement. Despite these impressive figures, there are major challenges, including the fact that due to the suspension of IGNOU scheme many students did not receive examination results, certifications and diplomas. This has cast a shadow over the implementation of the community college system in India and a committee is currently investigating the IGNOU Community College Scheme.

In order to give credibility to the community colleges, the government should take the issue of the existing community colleges under the IGNOU community college scheme seriously. While the government has taken note of the need for a community college system in India, there is no clear implementation plan. An autonomous agency is needed to act as a link between the government and the community to propagate and implement the community college scheme.

Dr. Brijender S. Panwar is founder and director of M.S. Panwar Institute of Communications & Management. Dr. Panwar received his Ph.D. in Mass Communications from University of Hyderabad.

The Indian Community College System: Inspiration from Community Colleges in the United States

Xavier Alphonse, S.J., Director, Indian Center for Research and Development of Community Education

Introduction

The community college movement in India began in 1995 and was modeled after the U.S. system, but adjusted to meet India's unique needs and aspirations. Specifically, it aims to empower the disadvantaged by helping them develop skills that will lead to gainful employment and make a qualitative difference in the lives of the urban, rural and tribal poor and women. The college system works in collaboration with local industrial establishments and potential employers, as well as community leaders, to create opportunities for employment and self-employment in the local area.

The Curriculum at India's Community Colleges

The curriculum at India's community colleges includes the following components:

- **Life Coping Skills:** to develop personality, sharpen personal skills and teach coping mechanisms to make a student fit for life and future employment.
- **Interpersonal Relations:** to empower students to articulate ideas and opinions and prepare them to speak confidently during an interview, group discussion or public presentation.
- **Computing Skills:** to develop basic knowledge of computer operations.
- **Developmental English:** part of the Life Skills curriculum. Courses begin at the basic level.
- **Work Skills:** subject-related and based on the needs of the local community. The curriculum includes both practical (60 percent) and theoretical (40 percent) components.
- **Internship:** on-the-job training tests both life and work skills in a practical setting.
- **Preparation for Employment:** helps students develop their resume, prepare for interviews, and understand how to keep a job.

Indian Community Colleges Look to the West

Excerpts from Edward J. Valeau's 2003 interview with Dr. Xavier Alphonse S.J.

Q) What did you discover in your research?

Dr. Alphonse: The U.S. community colleges are democratic colleges, they are people's college and provide equal opportunity for all, especially for groups like the Afro-Americans, the Hispanics and refugees who come from different parts of the world...What I liked most was access, flexibility and cost effectiveness.

Q) How have you adapted the U.S. model to meet to India's needs?

Dr. Alphonse: We have added elements to make the system applicable to our indigenous people...Community colleges aim to empower disadvantaged groups through skills development leading to gainful employment. Our watch word of the movement is access...Anybody can come into these institutions to get training for jobs...we can call the whole scheme "Education for Livelihood." We are specifically targeting the urban, rural and tribal poor and women—the most needy groups in our country.

The complete transcript is available at:

www.hartnell.cc.ca.us/president/fulbright/india.html

Table 1: Curriculum at an Indian Community College

Category	Program	Weeks	Hours	Credit*
PART I	Life Skills	21	630	21
PART II	Work Skills	21	630	21
PART III	Internship and Hands on Experience	8	390	13
PART IV	Preparation for Employment and Evaluation	2	60	2
TOTAL		52	1,710	57

*1 credit = 30 hours of work

Evaluation and Assessment of Skills

The evaluation and assessment of the skills of Indian community college students is an internal process, completed by the college with the help of technical and field experts. The evaluation tests actual skills gained rather than the absorption of information. The evaluation is completed by a team, made up of the life skills instructor, the work skills instructor, and the industrial supervisor. It is supplemented by each student's self-assessment of their college experience. This makes the evaluation comprehensive and purposeful.

The knowledge and skills components should be given equal weight. This evaluation is to be continuous, transparent and should contain checks and balances within the system to ensure credibility. Then the diploma or the certificate is signed by the director of the college as well as the industrial partner who has trained the students in the particular fields of specialization.

Diplomas or certifications are available from the following institutions:

- National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)
- Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli
- Bharathiar University, Coimbatore
- Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU), Chennai
- Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi

Industrial Collaboration

The community college cannot succeed without the active participation and collaboration of the industrial, rural, agricultural, commercial and service organizations of the locality. These sectors assist the community college in the following five ways:

- Designing the curriculum for various job-oriented courses.
- Serving as members of the advisory board.
- Being part-time instructors for teaching and assessment in the college.
- Providing on-the-job training for the students in the workplace.
- Providing job placement for students who have been trained at the college.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is often signed with industries for all the above five areas of collaboration. In addition, representatives from the above industrial, commerce and service sectors often serve as the members of the college's governing body.

Administration and Governance of the Community College

The Indian community college ensures participation of the members of the agency that establishes the college (also known as the Board of Management), the administrators, representatives of the faculty of the community college, industrial partners, community leaders, consultants to the community college and representatives nominated by the Government.

The authorities of the college oversee proper implementation of the curricula for life skills, work skills, and placement for training. They will oversee financial and general administrative matters, infrastructure and the facilities necessary for training. These authorities are broken up into the following statutory bodies:

- Board of Management
- Governing Body of the College
- Advisory Boards
- Director (Head), Program Coordinators, Placement Officer, Members of the College, Life Skills Staff, Work Skills Staff, Guest Faculty and Support Staff

Spread of Community Colleges across India

The community college movement has become a national phenomenon, spreading across of India. Between 1996 and 2013, 317 ICRDCE-managed community colleges were launched in 19 states across India.

Table 2: Numbers of ICRDCE-managed Community Colleges in India, by State

State	Number of Community Colleges
Tamilnadu	215
Karnataka	25
Kerala	13
Jharkhand	13
Andhra Pradesh	10
Maharashtra	7
Orissa	7
Madhya Pradesh	6
West Bengal	5
Puducherry	4
Uttar Pradesh	3
Chhattisgarh	2
Haryana	2
Gujarat	1
Himachal Pradesh	1
Punjab	1
Assam	1
Jammu & Kashmir	1
TOTAL	317

The Impact of the Community College System

The community college movement has empowered disadvantaged groups in India, achieving a higher gradation of educational standards and resulting in alleviation of poverty. A profile of 85,759 students attending 230 community colleges from different parts of India reveals the following groups students benefited from community colleges:

- 70 percent women
- 88 percent from socially disadvantaged groups
- 88 percent economically poor (monthly family income is below 3,000 rupees/\$54)
- 95 percent from educationally weaker sections, dropouts etc.

A breakdown by religion shows that 58 percent is Hindu, 33 percent is Christian, 8 percent is Muslim, and 1 percent is other religions (e.g., Buddhist, Sikh and Janism). There are 466 disabled students who have passed through this system. Approximately 2,680 industries have linked up with 152 community colleges, helping to ensure that after graduation; about 75 percent of the students are employed. In most cases, their family income has been doubled. It has led to poverty alleviation through income generation. The concept has become a secular one transcending religions, castes and languages. It is truly a nation-building and capacity-building exercise.

The Role of the Indian Center for Research and Development of Community Education (ICRDCE)

The Indian Center for Research and Development of Community Education (ICRDCE) is coordinating agency for community colleges in India. Located in Chennai, ICRDCE is an initiative of Madurai Jesuit Province and a unit of the ICRDCE Trust. Founded in January 1999, it has been involved in the preparation, establishment, monitoring and evaluation of 319 community colleges in 19 States of India to date. It has also trained 1,937 teachers. The Center has conducted 53 workshops involving 1,500 NGOs and 2,900 participants. It has also organized 11 national consultations and 69 regional consultations among community colleges. It has also prepared the basic curriculum material, which was supplied to all colleges. Since its inception, the ICRDCE has published many books and articles in the leading educational journals of India and abroad on the concept and implementation of the system. The Center also has up-to-date references on the community college movement in India, including newspaper clippings, video, audiotapes, CDs, photographs, etc.

ICRDCE is also active internationally, having created ten community colleges in East Africa and South Africa. Since June 2005, the ICRDCE has trained 50 teachers from South Africa and East Africa. In addition, the ICRDCE and its director were appointed as the consulting agency for Papua New Guinea to create 13 community colleges in 2008 as part of the “Inclusiveness in Education for National Development through the Community Colleges” project. The Center trained 130 teachers from Papua New Guinea as part of its work in the country.

Case Study: Tamil Nadu Open University Community College System

The community college system that is part of Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU) empowers disadvantaged persons through appropriate skills development, which lead to employment and make a difference in the lives of the urban poor, rural poor, tribal poor and women. The government of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu has authorized the Tamil Nadu Open University to recognize credit from community colleges offering job-oriented programs.⁶

A few examples of the programs are below:

Table 3: Courses for a Diploma for a DTP Operator (DDTP)

Course Code	Course Title	Credits
DDTP-1	Windows & MS Word	6
DDTP-2	Page Maker	6
DDTP-3	Corel Draw	4
DDTP-4	Photo Shop	4
LCS-1	Life Coping Skills	8
CNS-1	Communication Skills	8
DDTP – P1	Practical – 1: Windows & MS Word and Page Maker	4
DDTP – P2	Practical – 2: Corel Draw and Photo Shop	4
TOTAL NUMBER OF CREDITS		44

⁶G.O.(Ms).No.163 Higher Education (K2) Department dated 22-05-2008.

Table 4: Courses for a Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education (DECE)

Course Code	Course Title	Credits
DECE-1	Child Development and Psychology	6
DECE-2	Early Childhood Education (Pre School Teacher Training)	6
DECE-3	Nutrition, Health, Hygiene and First-Aid	4
DECE-4	Communication skills and Fundamental Computer	4
DECE-5	Project Work (Practical in a School)	8
LCS – 1	Life Coping Skills	8
TOTAL NUMBER OF CREDITS		36

Differences between the Community College System and other Vocational Systems in India

The Indian community college system differs from other forms of vocational education in the country (e.g., apprenticeship training, the plus two vocational system in schools, industrial training institutes (ITI), community polytechnics and the vocationalization of first-degree level education at the collegiate level) in the following ways:

- Focuses on the employability of the individual
- Aims to develop competencies and certify students simultaneously
- Promotes strong industry-institutional linkages by equipping students with skills that are in demand by local industries.
- Emphasizes the teaching of life, communication and English skills
- Lessens the burden on higher education
- Is an evolving a system of evaluation and assessment of personal, social, language, communication, work and creative skills.

Dr. Xavier Alphonse, S.J., is the founder and director of the Indian Center for Research and Development of Community Education. Dr. Alphonse, a Jesuit Priest and member of the Jesuit Province of Tamilnadu, has been the former Principal of Loyola College from 1992-1995 and served for two terms (2006-2009 and 2009-2012) on the University Grants Commission (UGC).

Community Colleges and Socio-Economic Growth in India

Murli Nagasundaram and Duleep Deosthale, Manipal Global Education Services

Despite economic power and the new title of the world's third largest economy (replacing Japan), India faces several challenges as it powers forward. Education has become a particular concern, as India's economic juggernaut does not find the necessary "fuel" in the output of skilled and semi-skilled workers to sustain its economic growth.

Though Indian culture has always placed a very high value on achieving academic credentials, Indian higher education suffers from a number of deficiencies, including:

- Insufficient number of academic institutions to serve the huge population, despite the existing 26,000 colleges and 500 universities scattered across the country.
- Current educational offerings neither match the needs of the market nor the abilities and interests of those wishing to advance economically.
- Poor quality of education with outdated curricula and pedagogy.

This juxtaposition results in massive competition for admission into Indian higher education institutions, which are unfortunately replete with a series of missteps. For instance, students end up enrolling in programs in which they have little interest. A lot of money is spent acquiring a diploma that, in the end, does not serve much purpose and leads to a large population of frustrated, anxious and underprepared graduates. And all this is taking place in an economy that lacks qualified and well-trained manpower to fulfill the needs of society and industry. The social and economic costs of such a dysfunctional academic ecosystem are incalculable.

The Problem with Indian Higher Education

There is no doubt that India's creaky and decrepit educational infrastructure is a legacy of the British Colonial era. After India's first War of Independence in 1857, the British authorities replaced India's traditional educational systems with an infrastructure designed to serve the needs of the colonial administration. Colonialists needed vast numbers of clerks that obeyed the orders of their masters. Talented Indians of means who sought advanced educational opportunities were compelled to travel to the UK and elsewhere; even Mohandas Gandhi, for example, boarded a ship to England to study law.

Post-independence in 1947, the Indian university system evolved incrementally, adding and expanding programs; but there were few changes in the way higher education was structured and delivered. Reform, or the speed of reform, has not been a hallmark of Indian higher education. In a recent editorial in *The Times of India*, Professor Harish Trivedi notes that it took Delhi University two decades to move from a two year to a three year BA program. More recently, when he took over as Chair of the English department, Professor Trivedi inherited a syllabus reform that had been in progress for nine years. Despite these obstacles, he does see exciting times ahead for Delhi University, which many consider the flagship of Indian higher education.

While there are several elite institutions in India, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and several colleges, the existing higher education infrastructure is vastly inadequate for a populous nation like India. Today the IITs, for example, serve less than 0.1 percent of the needs of engineering education in terms of the number of students enrolled. At the other end of the spectrum, the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), train high school graduates in vocational skills pertaining to manufacturing; however, education of conventional trades, such as carpentry and plumbing, remain in the domain of traditional

apprenticeships. Little thought have been given to professionalizing trades in the establishment of nationwide standards and skills-based training programs. Several efforts, such as *Shrameek Vidyapeeth* (Workers School), which focused on skills needed in the local areas, and a skills-based training program developed by Tata Electric & Locomotive Company (TELCO), known today as Tata Motors, have had positive results, but most have been largely abandoned as a college/university education was deemed more rewarding (more valued culturally).

Today, most Indians work in what is known as the ‘unorganized sector’ – small businesses and sole proprietorships – where they practice skills acquired on their own, usually by apprenticing themselves informally to more experienced tradesmen (who had acquired their skills in a similar fashion). This pattern yields a wide variation in knowledge and skills, which neither produces well-trained workers nor provides any opportunity for upward mobility. A 2009/10 survey by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in India reported that just “2 percent of India’s youth and only 7 percent of the whole working population have received vocational training.” These stark numbers are telling given the pace of intended progress in India.

Any modern society located in the Information Age requires sophisticated skills beyond what is learnable in high school. On the other hand, a traditional three- or four-year college degree is neither affordable nor necessary for the majority of India’s 1.2 billion people, based on the type of work they end up pursuing. Indeed, legions of Indians acquire college degrees (because Indian culture assigns intrinsic value to formal diplomas), but few practice trades related to their formal qualifications. The acquisition of useful trade skills would help lift hundreds of millions out of abject poverty, providing hope, as well as, a powerful boost to the economy.

Is the Community College Model an Answer?

Community colleges of some kind could provide a balance between an expensive but not particularly useful college education and no higher education at all. Community colleges could play a key role in formalizing the skills and knowledge of trades practiced in the country, including those from the Industrial Era, as well as, creating training programs for new trades and skills that have emerged over the past few decades.

Traditionally, cultural norms in India dictate that parents pay the cost of education for their children; children, for their part, obediently follow their parents’ wishes. As a result, young people find themselves in academic programs that are of no interest to them and have little motivation to learn. There are signs, however, that the tide is turning in favor of something other than a traditional college degree. Young people are more assertive about the avenues of learning and work they wish to pursue, and have begun to question the value of traditional college education. To be sure, this mindset has only begun and change in India is a slow process. In the meantime, the yawning gap between the IITs and ITIs has been filled by myriad diploma courses (i.e., diploma mills) that provide little in the form of skill or knowledge. The establishment of community colleges could provide an opportunity for the youth to acquire tangible skills that are directly transferable to the marketplace. By keeping the programs flexible, students could try out a variety of trades and discover one or more they identify with, which may motivate them to master the chosen skills over time.

Applications for the U.S. Community College System model in India

Historically, community colleges in the U.S. emerged in response to a demand for a skilled labor force to support America’s industrial and economic development. India finds itself in a similar situation today, more than a century later. The establishment of a system similar to the U.S. community college model

would remove the burden from “traditional” universities, which are incapable of addressing the needs of an entire population.

Since the U.S. increased the quota of student visas to Indians in the 1960s, Indians have shown an increasing preference for U.S.-style education over the prevailing UK-pattern education. One aspect that distinguishes the U.S. higher education system is its flexibility. This flexibility provides students the ability to mix and match courses to suit individual needs, rather than being locked into a curriculum prescribed by the university (as is typical in India). Furthermore, while UK-style higher education in India was devised originally for elites, the U.S. community college model was designed to accommodate students of modest means, who needed to quickly acquire practical skills that would help them financially support themselves and their families. This approach could be well-suited to India, where growth and change are happening at a much faster pace than ever before.

Furthermore, the U.S. tradition of credit transfer from community colleges to four-year colleges is also well-suited for India. Those of modest means can first generate an income stream from the skills acquired at a community college and then plough back their subsequent savings to earn a more advanced degree. For this to happen, Indian leaders need to examine best practices in the U.S. and other countries and develop an infrastructure that will support future economic growth. A tiered education system, similar to that in California, with a robust community college network that feeds into the California State University and University of California systems, might resonate well in India.

Implementation

There is significant economic, industrial, cultural and demographic variety across India and the introduction of a community college model therefore, should proceed cautiously. The experiment ought to start in locations with high potential and then be replicated and refined in other locations, and eventually in each state of India. Most importantly, it should strive to adapt to local conditions everywhere.

The first step is to establish a task force, consisting of eminent academicians, industrialists, social scientists and advisers from select community colleges in the U.S. and some Indian educators who can look beyond the politics of education, in order to frame a policy and develop an initial plan. The task force should aim to pilot a few community colleges in the first year and to train Indian faculty in suitable pedagogies (with the assistance of American community college faculty). Training Indian faculty at this level is critical given that there are over 20,000 vacant academic positions across higher education institutions in India due to a lack of qualified candidates. During this process, a community college research, development and training institute should be established to serve as a hub for the Indian community college project. The institute could be designed to collaborate with American community colleges in developing India-centric programs and pedagogies that address Indian challenges in regard to learning and teaching. As the number of community colleges in the country grows, similar centers could be established in each state and across the country.

While community colleges have historically served the growing needs of an industrializing society, there is no reason why the scope of such colleges should not also encompass traditional crafts, arts and professions. India has a several thousand year history of exporting a variety of crafts. For instance, until the 19th century, India was the world’s sole exporter of cut diamonds. Many of these traditional crafts are still valued, but are in danger of becoming extinct. Historically, these skills have been handed down within families but the thread is broken when one generation decides to abandon the trade altogether. In India, community colleges could become a space for preservation, as well as modernization, of these skills and trades and others to serve contemporary society.

We believe that creating community colleges based on the American experience and expertise and tailored to the needs of India will deliver tremendous economic and social dividends. We would even venture to state that while the elite IITs have put Indian technological expertise on the global map, it would be the Indian community colleges that are more likely to bring prosperity and equity to 1.2 billion Indians. Establishing community colleges in India is no longer an ‘if’ but a ‘when’ – and the sooner, the better for the upcoming generation of eager, aspirational Indians.

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V. APPLYING THE U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGE MODEL TO INDIA: U.S. PERSPECTIVES

The Indian Community College in India: An Evolving Model

Edward J. Valeau, former Superintendent President of Hartnell Community College

In 2003, through the United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF), I received a Fulbright scholarship to travel throughout India and Nepal for approximately eight weeks. The program was aimed at understanding the education, history, religious and cultural nuances affecting the population of India. During this visit, I met Dr. Alphonse, a Jesuit priest and founder of the Madras Center that is dedicated to promoting the community college concept in the region. Based on an interview with Dr. Alphonse, and visits to several schools and colleges during my stay in India, I observed many aspects of the evolving role of the community college concept in India. My visit affirmed that the U.S. community college system was the model being adapted to meet the needs of the learners in India, and was contributing to the increased availability of higher education in the country.

Since my visit to India in 2003, I have wondered what has occurred relative to the expansion, challenges, and opportunities to meet the needs of the millions of students seeking an educational opportunity in India. In 2009, Dr. Alphonse and I wrote a chapter about the current state of community college development in India. This article revisits the topic, analyzing how the country's demographics create challenges relative to higher educational systems currently in operation. The article also examines the policies that are being implemented to adapt and or shape the community college to meet Indian student needs. Additionally, the article profiles the strategies and ideas that may need implementation or more attention to ensure the community college expands its ability to meet the needs of the Indian community, particularly the poorest of the poor.

Indian Demography, Policy, and Challenges

Population data from 2011 reveals that India is the second most populous country in the world, with over 1.21 billion people. To put things in perspective, India's population exceeds that of the entire continent of Africa by 200 million people. The country has more than two thousand ethnic groups, and every major religion is represented. There is further variation in caste, history, and cultural beliefs. And there is additional diversity in the distribution of income and education across groups from the villages to the cities to the slums.

Education practices and policies in India are provided by the public and private sectors, with three levels of control and funding: central, state, and local. Higher education, including control of universities, falls under the control of both the Union Government and the states, with some responsibilities lying with the Union, and the states having autonomy for others. Unlike most countries, various articles of the Indian Constitution provide for education as a fundamental right. Elementary education is also compulsory.

The country has realized that its economic prosperity today and in the future is directly tied to an educated citizenry with a demonstrated ability to compete. Thus far, opportunities have been limited

and exclusive to a small percentage of the population. While the community college begins to address these needs, challenges remain in secondary education, where quality, high attrition, and poor instruction hurt students' chances to advance to the community college. These challenges are compounded, since many of the community colleges potentially also serve as a bridge to the university level, where the elite still dominate.

An adapted model of U.S.-style affirmative action policy also presents a challenge since this model has eroded over time, due to continued debate regarding institutional equal opportunity. Operationally, colleges affiliated with the federal government ensure a minimum 50 percent of admission places for predetermined castes. But this varies at the state level. For example, the state of Andhra Pradesh has a minimum of 83.33 percent of slots reserved for certain castes – arguably the highest percentage in India. In the United States, affirmative action has often met with resistance, dismantling, and a weakening of the law. And this has negatively impacted diverse enrollments at universities across the U.S.

U.S. community colleges, on the other hand, are seen as the colleges of democracy, where any student capable of benefitting from educational training is admitted and such enrollments not only represent the melting pot of the United States, but help ensure equal access. Many envision that similar institutions will create a similar system in India today. Thus, even though the Indian affirmative action law is under attack, equal access can still be achieved via the open access policies of the Indian community colleges.

The Community College Model as a Change Agent

The community college model is one of the most widely adapted forms of education world-wide and portends to be one of the systems of choice for reforming education. Concurrently, it is the product of years of borrowing and shifting focus that is time and geographically bound and designed to meet the needs of the identified learners wherever they are and no matter what their social and economic position might be (Raby and Valeau, 2009). In the United States, the community college has served to separate the first two years of college from the four years required for a university degree. This is in part because many of the students graduating from high school are under-prepared for the rigor of university studies and in need of remedial education, and in part to expand educational opportunities for the traditionally disenfranchised. These institutions are helping to make higher education available to a much larger percentage of the population, and to train an educated workforce to compete nationally and internationally.

Community college global counterparts, as a phenomenon, respond to the social, political and economic needs of the communities they serve (Spangler and Tyler, 2011). Community college global counterparts world-wide traditionally offer five basic kinds of programs that form a fundamental educational base for the learner: (1) transfer; (2) technical and occupational; (3) continuing education or lifelong learning; (4) remedial education; and (5) workforce development. The colleges bridge the gap between academia and technical training by making teaching and learning open and accessible. And they are a major game changer in the lives of students internationally, because the colleges are localized and influence the development of an educated citizenry (Raby and Valeau, 2012).

The Emergence of Community Colleges in India

There are nearly 600 million people under the age of 25 in India. This number highlights the country's need for education and skills training in order to ensure its current and future prosperity. India has long recognized a need for an institution to serve these populations. P.L. Malhotra made the first reference to adapting the U.S. community college model to India in the late 1970s (1978). But it wasn't until 1995 that the modern community college movement in India began (Alphonse and Valeau 2009), with the primary goal to empower disadvantaged populations of society through appropriate skills development that could lead to eventual employment. These institutions aimed to serve the disadvantaged urban poor, rural poor, tribal poor and women. The first model of collaboration leading to the opening of a community college dates to 1996, through an international development program that was created between Sinclair Community College in Iowa and the Jesuit mission based in South India (Cook 1996). The program's accreditation system led states such as Tamil Nadu to recognize credit, certificates and certified diplomas earned at community colleges. This opened the pathway to further development.

Expansion of the community college began around 2008, with the support of the Indian Center for Research and Development of Community Education (ICRDCE), which not only established community colleges, but helped to monitor their progress and effectiveness. The ICRDCE currently conducts workshops and training programs to assist those interested in starting community colleges throughout India and East Asia. In India, the ICRDCE works with Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Human Resources Department Ministry to support the development of community colleges. It is also credited with providing a direction and a focus for the community college movement. Because of this influence (Alphonse, 2013) ICRDCE has been instrumental in the establishment of 278 of the approximate 540 Community Colleges that currently operate in India.

Another important development is the Indira Gandhi National Community College model (IGNOU) that was launched on July 4, 2009. IGNOU functions under the Indira Gandhi National Open University, which is the largest university in the world. Open University was established in 1985 through an act of the Indian Parliament, and was designed to impact higher education by making distance and open education available to more people. The Open University mission seeks to provide higher education opportunities particularly to the disadvantaged segments of society. This university also helps to coordinate, determine and maintain standards as it acts as a national resource center for the examination of standards. The IGNOU offers educational opportunities to all sections of society, particularly the marginalized and the disadvantaged. These institutions are locality-based, region-based, trade-based or occupation based and even ICT-enabled-service-based. After completing studies through this scheme, a student is certified and can often find work placement.

The IGNOU acts as a regulator and provider through which community colleges can register to offer academic programs at the certificate, diploma and associate's degree levels. The college must be run by an educational agency/registered society/trust or corporate body rooted in community-based activities. The colleges must be credible institutions with a minimum period of five years of proven service and be located in the community they serve. In the IGNOU community college system, programs and offerings are tailored to local needs and state-based requirements focusing on strategies that help workers in a given community. Under this model, a community college may be defined as an institution which is "for the community, by the community and of the community" and certified by IGNOU to award an associate's degree as its highest degree.

IGNOU's role in Indian higher education is so instrumental that the Ministry of Human Resources Development intends to set up model community colleges across five zones of India, leading to the integration of their colleges with existing vocational programs. This may reduce student access, as the university hopes to shut down 380 community colleges in an attempt to integrate its scheme with the governments' National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) and the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) (India Express 2013). The university (based on its own evaluations) concluded that of the 532 community colleges serving approximately 80,000 students, only 150 are performing up to standard, which means the others will be shut down and again access will be denied to those most in need. It is a problem when you consider that an inferior education is useless and filled with false hope and promises.

The Challenges of Change

Since 2003, India has undergone a socio-cultural change and is rapidly being influenced by western culture, which seeps deeper into the choices of a generation that has grown up with access to television, the internet and education, and has developed a hunger for a better standard of living. The youth of the country, who have traditionally been disenfranchised and marginalized, underemployed, underprepared and under-educated, are the generation of the future. This is also the group that will make up the workforce that is needed to ensure India keeps up with advancing industrialized nations. In 2012, the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development, along with the UGC, announced establishing 100 community colleges based on the U.S. model. This is an excellent way to help the young members of the population, not so much because these institutions represent the U.S. model, but because the foundation of open access, this model uses helps to address India's unique needs. As such, this model could potentially reset the direction of the entire country.

Moreover, in an improved alliance with the United States, led by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the concept of the community college is more visible and is being touted as the vehicle to support India's advancement. As a vehicle for change it has never been stronger. The United States depends heavily on the well-trained engineering talent flowing out of India and into the United States, which contributes to America's position as a world leader in software and hardware innovations. India's influence is such that it has played an influential role in determining the contents of work visa policies in the United States' immigration debate.

Concurrently, India's major challenge remains in reaching the young, the mobile, and those hungry for immediate and sustained change. Offering a curriculum that is standardized and responsive to the many varied needs is no easy task. It is one that must begin at the lower and secondary levels of education, where students are prepared to compete domestically and internationally.

Across India, university spots continue to go unfilled as students cannot jump the hurdle of inadequate preparation, dropout because families demand support, poorly prepared teachers who promote curricula that does not include critical thinking, administrative leadership that is nearly powerless to affect or lead change, and employers who engage in worker exploitation.

Challenges for change include: creating and implementing educational policy and funding to strengthen community college programming; preparing students to transfer to the university level; and making it easier for students to claim the slots made available by reverse discrimination policies. The accreditation standards that govern institutional excellence at Indian community colleges must also be refined, as they are instrumental in creating effective and efficient colleges. India must market the community

college system as a system that not only trains people, but also educates and creates a productive citizenry that respects all cultures, a citizenry that embodies informed progress, and that addresses the needs for change and adaptability.

Changing the way government and private industries currently supports community colleges into a way that makes the college truly community-based and sustainable is another challenge. Finally, the view of success and education must not begin and end with being a doctor or an engineer. The country needs a well-rounded workforce that respects and is proud of paid labor, and rejects the caste system, which limits opportunity according to one's position in society.

Advancing Changes and New Directions

If we look for new directions for community colleges in India to move in, we must look inward, at the Ministry of Human Resource Development's plan to pilot 200 community colleges in 2013, there are four specific strategies that need to be considered as the movement continues to unfold: First, community colleges need to meet standards as certified by IGNOU Community College. This scheme should be replicated or adapted to meet the needs of the students in various states across India, in order to support a vision that can lead to expanded employment and a meaningful path to the university. Secondly, ICRDCE needs to expand its strategic planning so that decisions on community college placement are informed and driven by data. Third, India's interest in the U.S. model, represented by development projects like Montgomery Community College in Maryland and Shoreline Community College in Washington State should continue, but in coordination with other models from other countries so that the richness of others is visible. (It is noteworthy to highlight India's interaction with a variety of community college global counterparts, including the current MOU with the UK's Colleges of Further and Higher Education) (IndiaEducationReview.com, 2013). Fourth, governance must be strengthened to encourage leadership and collaboration at the site level. Such a move helps to ensure ownership of decisions made and while at times cumbersome and slow, is at the cornerstone of success across U.S. community colleges.

Policy formation and stable funding should be linked, in order to expand the focus on economic, social and educational exclusions, thus helping to bridge the gap to success. Educational policy and practices should also be revised to ensure that the associate's degree is recognized as a respected and acceptable pathway for entry/admission into the third year of a bachelor's degree program at IGNOU or the state open universities. IGNOU should consider some form of affiliation with the community colleges to accord them more status and a voice for students interested and prepared to transfer to the university. Of course undergirding all of this is the need to strengthen the primary and secondary systems of education in India. The passing of Right to Education (RTE) Act, and making schooling compulsory was much needed. Concurrently, the Secondary Education for All Action Plan potentially creates a pathway to the community college and up to the university.

Conclusions

It is a foregone conclusion that community colleges are adaptable models that seem to be the wave of the future for nations looking to improve their students' ability to compete domestically and internationally (Raby and Valeau 2012). India's current and expanding system of community colleges helps create a needed trained workforce, provides access to education for people who are left out and builds an educated citizenry that sees the value of developing generational success. India's community college system is challenged by recent results that show it ranked second-to-last among 73 countries

that participated in the Program for International Assessment (PISA) conducted annually to evaluate education systems worldwide (Times of India, 2012). The country is evolving as it struggles to maintain a global presence beyond the exportation of talent, and plan for a future where all participants are given access—access that is measured in terms of completion and transfer to the university. There are now encouraging signs, compared to my 2003 visit, including the law of right to free education for elementary students supported by compulsory attendance and the Secondary Education for All Action Plan, and the expansion of consultation and partnership with U.S. community colleges. This is an indication that India is attempting to live the reality of being the world’s largest democracy. Continued implementation of an effective community college system will solidify the country’s ability to sustain and expand its newly-found economic boon.

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Making Community Colleges Work in India: Providing Access, Fueling Aspirations

Rahul Choudaha, Director of Research and Strategic Development at World Education Services

Much has been written about the demand-supply mismatch for skilled workforce in India. Recent reform initiatives by the Government of India through the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF), which aims to “allow cross mobility of standards and their absorption in industry with certain skill gained over a fixed period of time or their seamless integration into higher learning that enable them to acquire formal degree” and National Skill Development Corporation India (NSDC), a public-private partnership model “to facilitate the development and upgrading of the skills of the growing Indian workforce through skill training programs,” are a move in the right direction.

However, the reform initiatives need a much stronger structural change to reshape the sociocultural expectations of a vocational education. There is an aspirational barrier among students and families who do not consider vocational education as an economically rewarding or socially recognizable career path. And this often magnifies the aforementioned demand-supply mismatch. This issue can be illustrated by comparing the vocational student pipelines in the U.S., China and India.

Comparison of Vocational Education Pipelines

Community colleges in the U.S. provide easy and affordable access to post-secondary education and facilitate transfer opportunity to four-year bachelor’s degree institutions. In addition, they offer non-credit certificate programs related to community engagement or cultural activities.

Over 1,100 community colleges enroll more than 8 million students in credit-bearing courses, according to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Nearly 60 percent of community college students attend part-time, which mirrors the age profile of 60 percent of students being over 22 years old. This indicates that the majority of students in community colleges in the U.S. are working adults who cannot afford to go to school full-time and need work opportunities. Another report, “Why Access Matters: The Community College Student Body,” reasserts the important role of community colleges in providing affordable education to a large number of underserved and working populations.

In contrast, the Indian vocational education system is highly fragmented and the purpose of “community colleges” is served by three types of institutions—polytechnics, publicly-funded Industrial Training Institutions (ITIs) or privately-funded Industrial Training Centers (ITCs) and other unregulated private training institutions. Polytechnics provide vocational education after grade 12, ITIs/ITCs after grade 10 and private training institutions provide certification in high-demand sectors like computers (hardware and software) or fashion designing, after grade 10 and 12.

Polytechnics and ITIs/ITCs have been facing constraints of quality and funding, which is manifested in poor infrastructure and a curriculum that is misaligned with industry needs. This has resulted in poor employability outcomes for the graduates and a continued dissatisfaction from industry leaders based on inadequate skill level of graduates. Consequently, many vocationally trained students face a dead-end: they can’t find good jobs and at the same they lack mobility or transfer options for further education. A confluence of negative factors has created a situation where many students in India are willing to pursue a poor quality bachelor’s degree instead of aspiring to a top quality vocational education.

Another reason that a vocational education is unattractive to Indian students is that there is a disproportionately higher concentration at the bachelor’s degree level in India as compared to China and the U.S. While less than 20 percent of the 18-24 age group population have access to a post-

secondary education, India has the largest system in the world in terms of students enrolled for bachelor's degrees.

India enrolls nearly 19.8 million students in bachelor's degree, compared to 12.7 million in China and 10.4 million in the U.S. As a proportion of the total student enrollment in higher education, India has nearly 75 percent of all its students pursuing a bachelor's degree as compared to 43 percent for China and nearly 50 percent for the U.S.

One unique characteristic of the Indian higher education system is the availability of a three-year bachelor's degree in Arts, Science and Commerce, which forms more than 85 percent of all bachelor's degree enrollments. These degrees at least command sociocultural respect and provide pathways for further education.

Thus, many prefer to pursue three-year bachelor's degree instead of even considering vocational education. Only a smaller proportion of Indian students enroll in vocational education, with nearly 4 million students, as compared to nearly 9.6 million students in China and 8 million in the U.S.

Conclusions

Demand-supply mismatch in vocational education in India is accentuated by an inherent lack of understanding from prospective students and families who do not see vocational education as a socially and economically rewarding pathway. The community college model in India has the potential to free the country from the structural constraints of polytechnic schools and begin a new era of educational access and employment aspirations. However, this would require massive shift in alternatives available to students and how they perceive and experience them.

In addition to policy changes and enhanced public-private partnerships, there are additional areas that need reform. First, there must be more research to understand the students who are most likely to be attracted to the community college. Second, successful exemplars of community colleges need to be established and supported, especially through partnerships with American community colleges, to substantially improve the caliber, capacity and competitiveness of vocational education in India. Finally, an aggressive and transformational marketing campaign that clearly explains the differences and benefits of community colleges should be co-developed with industrial leaders.

As Malcolm Gladwell notes in *The Tipping Point*, "If you want to bring a fundamental change in people's belief and behavior...you need to create a community around them, where those new beliefs can be practiced and expressed and nurtured."

Community colleges' growth and success in India can reach a tipping point by establishing a community of change that brings stakeholders from industry, academia and policymakers, establishes models of success and makes students aspire to be part of this community.

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Developing a Comprehensive U.S.-Style Community College in India: The Case of Bellefonte Community College

Barry Bannister, Director of International Development, Green River Community College

Since early 2007, Green River Community College (GRCC) in Auburn, Washington has facilitated the development of what may well become India's first comprehensive United States-style community college – Bellefonte Community College (BCC) in Shillong, Meghalaya. The GRCC-BCC institutional model incorporates all the elements that make American community colleges such unique organizations, including a board of trustees and a college foundation from the outset.

GRCC has focused on organizational development and on training the administrative team at BCC, as well as instructional development in ESL, technology, sustainable agriculture and hospitality management. This partnership provides GRCC students and faculty with opportunities for service learning and development, as well as facilitating exchange visits by colleagues from India.

In the years since GRCC administrators – including the college president and chair of the Board of Trustees – visited India to initiate this relationship, there have been nine exchange visits to support BCC in their efforts to create an American-style community college. Rotary International has generously provided funding for classroom and office renovations at BCC and for the expansion of educational services for women in the villages served by BCC.⁷ Private U.S.-based donors have also provided funding for the expansion of micro-finance self-help projects, and also for the preliminary stages of construction of the new academic block.⁸

Approximately 350 micro-finance self-help groups are being trained by BCC and GRCC faculty as part of this community college development initiative, fundamentally changing the lives and livelihoods of more than 3,000 women and their families, in this predominantly matrilineal society. After further training, students either enter employment or continue their higher education studies at Green River, or at local universities.

Introducing the Partners

Green River Community College (GRCC) is an accredited public two-year college that serves approximately 8,000 students (FTE), of whom 1,500 are international students from more than 50 countries. As a winner of the 2013 Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization, GRCC is one of America's leading international colleges, with a long history of hosting students at its three campuses in Washington State and at universities abroad in Europe, Australasia, Japan and South America. During the past 30 years, GRCC has developed relationships with the many top tier universities to which its international students have transferred to complete their bachelor's and higher degrees, including at one of our cooperating institutions, Washington State University (WSU).

GRCC's long term strategy for the greater Asian region has included a commitment to investing in cooperative relationships with high schools and colleges in China and India. In India, these relationships have been facilitated by grants from the U.S. Department of State for global leadership development programs, which GRCC has supplemented by underwriting follow-on conferences in India, eventually leading to the BCC-GRCC initiative. A degree of synergy has been achieved through organizing for alumni

⁷ This was achieved through presentations to Rotary clubs and the submission of a grant application by a key supporter of this project.

⁸ Funding has come from a member of the GRCC Foundation Board, from individuals, and through monies raised by *Friends of Bellefonte* contributing at fund-raising events.

of these leaderships programs to spend time at BCC working as interns with visiting GRCC faculty.

Bellefonte Community College (BCC) in India is a private educational institution transitioning to the U.S. community college model, with an adult basic, professional-technical and community education mission – catering to young people in Shillong and in outlying areas of the state through rural development programs. The college develops and empowers the community – especially the marginalized – through formal and non-formal professional education. In doing so, it cooperates with state, national and international partners to advance the welfare and development of all, and of women in particular, in the state of Meghalaya – and eventually in the neighboring states of Mizoram, Tripura, and in the Barak Valley and Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

BCC has a history of providing high school completion, community outreach and continuing education, as well as creating, training and maintaining self-help cooperatives throughout the Khasi and Garo hill regions of the state. Prior to establishing these micro-credits, self-help cooperatives, the current president of BCC trained with Nobel Laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus, and adapted his micro-credit methodologies to suit the conditions in rural Meghalaya.

Developing the BCC-GRCC Relationship

Cooperation between BCC and GRCC began with a meeting in Bangalore in March 2007 between Helen Puwein, the current president of BCC, and Barry Bannister, GRCC’s international development director, and member of the BCC Board of Trustees since 2008. They agreed on a plan to enhance educational opportunities for school leavers in the Shillong region of Meghalaya through an institutional development strategy which would gradually create a community college out of a high school. Helen Puwein’s request was outlined in a vision summarized as: “we want what you (GRCC) have; not just a vocational training center, but a full, comprehensive U.S.-type of college, even if it takes 30 years to develop.”

In 2008, BCC organized a conference attended by leaders from the local civic, education, and private sectors, on the topic of “The Community College Model of Education”. During this conference, a proposed college development agenda was also endorsed by the then-state Minister for Education, Dr. M. Ampareen Lyngdoh, and reaffirmed in 2010 during a full meeting of the BCC Board of Trustees reviewing progress and making future plans for the college.

During the meeting in 2008, Minister Lyngdoh also sought comment on the suitability of a U.S.-style community college model of higher education for the proposed Meghalaya state education plan and the GRCC representative was consulted on the state government white paper being developed as part of the reform of education. Gradually, the specifications for a community college in Northeast India emerged as an outgrowth of existing programs on the Bellefonte campus, as well as through reference to U.S. models studied during a 2009 visit to GRCC by BCC administrators Bernadette Sangma and Helen Puwein.

During the past six years, there have been exchange visits in both directions, funded by BCC and GRCC respectively, laying the foundations for a formal cooperative agreement signed by the two colleges during the June 2010 meeting of the BCC Board of Trustees in Shillong. In 2010, the newly-named college (BCC) was registered with the government of Meghalaya as a U.S.-style community college. Helen Puwein has also been centrally involved in negotiations, which resulted in Rotary International funding renovations on the BCC campus and assisting with the expansion of educational services for women in the villages served by BCC.

The BCC-GRCC cooperative program is currently at a stage of development where further progress is challenging, despite the laying of the foundation stone for the new academic block. There is a vital need for continuing assistance from the private sector and international development sources to fund the

construction of the new academic block and continue the work of training the BCC management team in how to strategically manage a community college. This is a top priority for the GRCC team, since without the teaching space provided by the new main building and our continuing to ‘train the trainers and administrators,’ the benefits to the community may not be sustainable by BCC staff in the long term.

Development Themes for Bellefonte Community College

The GRCC team comprises academics, administrators and agricultural scientists with considerable international experience in South Asia, working on programs funded by the U.S. government and international organizations such as the World Bank and United Nations. The GRCC team is confident, therefore, of delivering appropriate knowledge, skills and technical assistance at the standard of ‘*world's best practice*’, in each of the three main development themes of:

- Developing & Strengthening BCC as a U.S.-style Community College
- Sustainable Agriculture in the Local Villages
- Environmental Management

Project Goals

From the beginning, BCC-GRCC established two main goals for their cooperative enterprise, namely:

- To develop BCC as a U.S.-style community college, with local characteristics and according to strategic priorities agreed by the BCC Board of Trustees;
- To create and nurture relationships, systems and processes to ensure long-term continuation of the GRCC-BCC development program through robust implementation and continuous monitoring and improvement practices.

Measuring Progress

A key measure of the success of the BCC-GRCC initiative is the extent to which quality of life markedly improves for the communities in Shillong, promoting equality, along with ethical decision-making and increasing economic and community prosperity.

BCC’s mission is focused on increasing entrepreneurial skills through vocational training centers in urban and rural areas – and on the training of youth enrolled in technology and language programs. BCC’s clear aim is also to empower rural women via leadership skills training, emphasizing the habits of saving, sanitation, health, agriculture and other income generating activities.

In terms of infrastructure, a major measure of success will be the completion of the new BCC academic block, which is required for the next stage of development. A more remote but no less important measure of success is the positive feedback at the community, city and state levels on the value of the BCC as a high-quality, proactive community resource center.

Other success measures include the number and quality of U.S. student and faculty visit programs targeting priority fields of study, especially ESL, agriculture, small business/micro-finance and information technology.

Benefits of the BCC-GRCC Community College Development Project

Benefits to BCC include the acquisition of the knowledge, techniques and credibility to significantly impact the communities it serves by substantially improving its capacity to respond to community needs. It does this because of its ability to provide specific high-quality training in required skill areas.

BCC faculties have access to world's best practices in community college-focused curriculum and educational methodology and receive mentorship for implementing these best practices. BCC administrators benefit from being equipped with the knowledge and skills to work effectively with stakeholders to ensure the gradual development of this unique institution in the local context.

Benefits to GRCC include the enhancement of its internationalization outreach through the experience of providing broad-ranging educational services to BCC and by hosting BCC faculty and staff at GRCC campuses. In addition, working with students, faculty and community members in Shillong leads to improved mentoring skills, as well as a greater understanding of how culture and foreign contexts affect the implementation of the U.S. community college model.

By contributing to the development of a U.S.-style community college in Northeast India, GRCC students, faculty and administrators learn new ways of adapting to a foreign environment. They also are given the opportunity to modify existing techniques and models through their application to educational and broader community contexts in Meghalaya and surrounding regions. Finally, involvement in the BCC-GRCC project facilitates the enhancement of research, teaching and intercultural communication skills supported by an improved understanding of diversity issues and cultural differences through working with BCC and its communities.

Lessons Learned

We continue to “learn as we go” – a common feature of development projects; however, the following highlight recurring themes at this stage of the project:

1. The proposed plan needs to be part of a strategy to internationalize curricula, faculty and staff within the context of campus globalization.
2. Ongoing support from senior administrators from the initial stages of the project is crucial.
3. A long-term view is required in assessing return-on-investment and this in turn is expressed in terms of the development of human capital rather than return on financial capital.
4. Faculty and staff have to be convinced of the benefits to them personally as well as to both institutions.
5. The communities served by both partner colleges need to be apprised of the benefits of the development program and be represented in decision-making forums.
6. Funding support from a variety of sources, as mentioned earlier, is necessary to defray the costs of such a community college development program as BCC and GRCC have embarked upon.
7. As a long term investment for both BCC and GRCC, persistence pays—whether in involving more and more *Friends of Bellefonte*, or in soliciting donations, grants, or in-kind assistance.
8. As important as grants and financial contributions are, long term success depends upon volunteerism, altruism and passion, especially from a strong team of project champions.

Conclusions

Only after the groundwork of the past quarter century or more could Green River confidently undertake projects such as helping to develop a U.S.-style community college in the Himalayan hill country for disadvantaged women and children in India. Only after convincing the local community that true globalization implies altruism, is it possible to reach out to international audiences as a means of sharing the knowledge and benefits acquired through welcoming students and scholars from around the world.

Only then can we claim to be a globalized, caring and compassionate community, believing that international exchange is truly a two-way process in which receiving, as well as a commitment to giving back, are vital to an authentic international education program and campus.

Having said that, we realize this is just the beginning of a journey towards helping to realize the vision of BCC President Helen Puwein and her colleagues. At the same time, we are confident of having made a substantial contribution to what will eventually be a model Indian community college built upon the best that the American experience has to offer.

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