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India-Australia Institutional Collaborations In Higher Education: Potential, Problems, Promises

A report for the Australia India Education Council

Fazal Rizvi, Radhika Gorur and Carola Reyes



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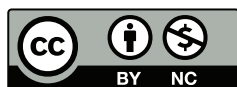
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The importance of collaborations between Indian and Australian institutions of higher education is now widely recognised at both institutional and governmental levels. However, while there is a great deal of interest in forging institutional collaborations in both India and Australia, several hurdles are encountered on both sides. Some of these difficulties relate to practical issues such as clarity over policy frameworks and governmental regulations; the availability of adequate levels of resources and institutional support; and differences across academic traditions in India and Australia. Other difficulties are of a more conceptual kind. These revolve around the lack of a coherent rationale for collaborations within the context of a shifting global architecture of higher education, together with the absence of a satisfactory account of the conditions under which collaborations are best forged and the ways in which they are best assessed, extended and sustained.

This report, funded by the Australia India Education Council (AIEC), provides an overview of the potential, possibilities and problems of institutional collaborations between Indian and Australian institutions of higher education. It is based on data collected from case studies of three Australian universities — Deakin, Monash and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) — and their links with a diverse array of Indian institutions of higher education. The case studies involved reviewing relevant documents accessible on the institutions' websites and semi-structured interviews with key participants across most of their relationships, in both Australia and India. The three case studies present an indicative picture of the range of current activities and plans for collaborations between Australian and Indian institutions of higher education.

The report provides a brief account of the broader conditions under which higher education institutions in India and Australia operate and how and why the interest in international collaborations is evolving. It notes that while both India and Australia recognise the significance of the political dynamics of globalisation in re-forming and re-shaping their systems of higher education, their perspectives on internationalisation are not the same — nor are their interests and capacities. These differing interests and capacities have given rise to a range of perceptions of benefits of institutional collaboration. In order to develop a more coherent view the report points to a need to create further spaces in which each side can learn about the similarities, differences and points of convergence across the two systems of higher education. The development of collaborative arrangements that are characterised by the principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit requires a better understanding not only of the emerging modes of collaborations, the obstacles that are repeatedly confronted, and the broader conditions of success but also a recognition that there is no single formula of success and that productive collaboration cannot be achieved without trust and long term commitment to respectful dialogue and experimentation.

The report notes that new forms of social and economic coordination, as well as new modes of knowledge production and utilisation increasingly require universities everywhere to become more agile, distributed and able to service diverse interests. As universities become international, networked, multi-sited and hybrid, new possibilities arise for collaboration that go beyond the traditional modes of international cooperation. These possibilities raise quite different issues for India and Australia, given the differences in their structures as well as their policy concerns and ambitions. However, there are significant synergies which could be harnessed if both countries are to mutually profit in a meaningful and sustained manner through collaborations in higher education.

To realise these synergies, the report recommends that both Australian and Indian authorities need to continue to encourage collaborations through greater policy clarity to potential international partners. It recommends that Australian and Indian universities negotiate ways of extending the successful model of collaboration developed in recent years around shared supervision of research students and working on shared research problems of interest to both communities and industries. They should also examine ways of extending this model to other levels of education, with an emphasis on the

mobility of students, together with the development of better mechanisms for credit transfer across institutions. The report also highlights the possibilities of collaboration resulting from greater use of communication technologies in both teaching and research. And finally the report recommends the creation of a program, funded by the two governments, corporate and other private sources which support innovation in collaborative activities that investigate and enact new modes of engagement.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	5
Background	6
Examples of Collaboration	8
Perceptions of Benefit	11
Barriers to Collaborations	14
Conditions of Success	18
Conclusion and Recommendations	22
Appendix 1: List of Institutions Consulted	24
References	26

INTRODUCTION

The importance of collaborations across Indian and Australian institutions of higher education is now widely recognised. Indeed, a large number of collaborations already exist. A wide variety of twinning and articulation arrangements have been forged between Australian and Indian institutions of higher education and more are being planned. Other forms of linkages have also emerged, or are being negotiated, centred on student and staff exchange, study abroad and project-based experiences. Research links have also grown steadily, centred mostly on research training. Australian and Indian authorities have also cooperated in strengthening bilateral education, training and research exchange. The Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) is a major initiative of the governments of Australia and India to strengthen collaboration in science and research. The AISRF is Australia's largest fund dedicated to collaboration in scientific research with any country and one of India's largest sources of support for international science.

While there is a great deal of interest in forging institutional collaborations in both India and Australia, several hurdles are encountered on both sides. Some of these difficulties relate to practical issues such as clarity over policy frameworks and governmental regulations; availability of adequate levels of resourcing and institutional support; and differences across academic traditions in India and Australia. Other difficulties are of a more conceptual kind. These revolve around the lack of a coherent rationale for collaborations within the context of a shifting global architecture of higher education, together with the absence to date of a satisfactory account of the conditions under which collaborations are best forged and the ways in which they are best assessed, extended and sustained.

This report, funded by the Australia India Education Council (AIEC), provides an overview of the potential, possibilities and problems of institutional collaborations between Indian and Australian institutions of higher education. It is based on data collected from case studies of three Australian universities — Deakin, Monash and RMIT — and their links with a diverse array of Indian institutions of higher education. The case studies involved reviewing relevant documents accessible on the websites and semi-structured interviews with key participants across most of their relationships, in both Australia and India. In all, 56 participants from 15 organisations and institutions were interviewed across Australia and India. The three case studies provided insights into a variety of relationships and collaboration arrangements. The detailed interviews with a variety of participants — researchers, administrators, program coordinators, heads of international offices — provided a rich and complex picture of why collaborations are perceived to be attractive, the various motivations that promote them, the obstacles they face, and the practices that make for successful and sustained partnerships.

Based on this detailed empirical work, this report provides an account of the broader conditions under which higher education institutions in India and Australia currently operate. It describes the practices involved, and examines the contrasting perceptions that are held in the two countries about the benefits of institutional collaborations. It discusses some of the key barriers faced in attempts to forge and sustain collaborative links. The final part of the report considers the conditions under which it might be possible to establish and sustain collaborative partnerships between Indian and Australian institutions of higher education, consistent with the principles of benefit, trust and reciprocity. It ends with a few very general recommendations for both policy makers and practitioners for maximizing the potential of institutional collaborations in higher education.

BACKGROUND

The links between Indian and Australia higher education are not new, and stretch back to the colonial period, when, in the middle of the 19th century, public universities were established in both countries following similar academic and organisational structures. Between 1950s and 1970s a large number of Indian students came to Australian universities under the Colombo Plan. Since the late 1980s this developmental mode of collaboration has been largely replaced with a more commercial model that has attracted an increasing number of fee-paying Indian students to Australian institutions of higher education. In the past decade, as India has become more economically open and globally networked, and as both Australia and India have sought to respond to the pressures of globalisation there has been an increased interest in forging partnerships and new patterns of collaboration have emerged involving student and staff mobility, and joint academic and research activities, while further possibilities continue to be explored.

However, this exploration is taking place under contrasting governance structures and policy priorities. Key policy priorities in India (Planning Commission of India 2007; Yashpal Report 2009) are to:

- › Dramatically increase provision to cope with the massive rise in student demand, both current and projected;
- › Explore and put in place a range of delivery options to achieve increased provision;
- › Force an improvement in the quality of programs and teaching;
- › Increase equity and access to marginalised communities in particular, using strategies that go beyond the traditional models of positive discrimination;
- › Enhance research performance, capacity, infrastructure and output, and make more universities research active; and
- › More efficiently forecast and cater for changing labour market demands.

Policy makers acknowledge that unless India is able to address these priorities, the international ranking of India's top universities is unlikely to rise (Agarwal 2009). Nor will Indian higher education be able to meet India's enormous economic and social challenges. In the end, for India to unleash the energy and creativity of its young people it needs universities that are innovative and globally networked. Strategic collaborations are thus important for the realization of India's aspirations in higher education (Sanat 2006). India's perspective on internationalisation is arguably linked to these national priorities.

Policy priorities in Australian higher education are shaped by a somewhat different set of drivers, which are linked not only to issues of access and quality but also to its growth and economic sustainability. With about half of Australian universities in the top 500 on international ranking scales, according to the Bradley Report (2008), Australia needs to:

- › Provide greater access and opportunities of higher education to marginalised communities;
- › Promote diversity and innovation in teaching, taking advantage of new technologies and social media;
- › Enhance Australia's competitiveness in the global knowledge economy by increasing research output;
- › Attract international students, a high calibre of knowledge workers, and those with skills in areas of anticipated need;
- › Forge a stronger research culture to produce new knowledge that is both socially useful and can be converted into commercial products; and
- › Develop sustainable international collaborations that make for on-going and significant engagement that goes beyond the recruitment of overseas students to study in Australia.

Increasingly, higher education policies are being framed within the context of international relations and soft diplomacy. India's importance within the region is enhanced with its economic success on the global stage. It is transitioning from an aid-receiving nation to one that gives financial aid. Collaborations with India in higher education are increasingly being forged not only at the level of ministers of education, but also heads of state, as the Singh-Obama 21st Century Initiative¹ demonstrates. Australia's recent *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*² illustrates the strategic interest it has in developing a variety of links with Asian nations with higher education front and centre in political and economic strategic plans.

The demography of Australian institutions of higher education has changed substantially over the past two decades, as has the role Australian universities are expected to play in producing graduates able to compete effectively in the global economy. This has led to shifts in thinking about curriculum and pedagogy, with an interest in defining graduate attributes linked to the changing needs of the economy and society. There is a growing recognition of the ways in which developments in information and communication technologies are re-shaping not only the nature of work and economic activity but also cultural practices, encouraging global mobility and connections. Policy priorities in higher education in Australia need to become aligned to these shifting realities. Its agenda for internationalisation is therefore driven not only by an interest in attracting fee-paying students but increasingly by a focus on international alliances, networks and other forms of collaborative practices (Walters 2012).

Beyond these differences in policy priorities for higher education in India and Australia, it is important to note that the broader global context within which collaboration between Indian and Australian universities has the potential to grow is rapidly changing, enabling links to move beyond the traditional practices such as student and faculty exchange, towards new models and rationales. Collaborations are always premised on a certain set of assumptions about how higher education institutions are — and should be — structured and managed. But in the context of the seismic shifts globally in the processes of knowledge production, dissemination and utilisation, new possibilities of institutional collaborations are clearly emerging.

For institutions, these shifts are defined by new configurations of resource dependencies, with greater privatisation, dependence on private fee income, industry involvement in research, and international fee-paying students; greater mobility of staff and students; a general expansion of curricular possibilities through technologies which loosen constraints of time and place; and an increasing isomorphism as institutions become more standardized through global requirements, rankings and collaborations. These shifts have the potential of resulting in new academic and research practices as global higher education communities develop, aided in part by the increasing use of English as the language of research dissemination and in part by new modalities of communication.

If these global shifts in higher education are as extensive as this account suggests then it is at the intersection of these global trends and local priorities that the trajectories of new collaborative forms are best imagined, negotiated and enacted. In India, for example, there is a growing recognition that the creation of many more places in higher education to cope with the youth bulge needs to be accompanied by a simultaneous injection of dynamism into the system through improvements on many fronts, including infrastructure, professional development and training, curriculum and pedagogy. In Australia, the recognition of the growing competition in higher education exists alongside discussions concerning the changing nature of knowledge production and dissemination. However, in both countries, it is recognised that a re-conceptualisation of the purposes and structures of higher education cannot be adequately explored without an understanding of the nature of the emerging architecture of global higher education, and without taking advantage of the conceptual and strategic resources that now exist outside — or beyond — the nation. It is in this context that the possibilities of institutional collaborations across national boundaries are now considered and enacted.

1 <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/06/192154.htm>

2 <http://asiancentury.dpmc.gov.au/white-paper>

EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION

In recent years, a whole array of collaborative arrangements between Indian and Australian institutions of higher education have emerged, in a diversity of disciplinary fields, driven by a variety of motivations, and currently at various states of negotiation and maturity. A partial review conducted by Australian Education International (AEI) of existing university links found over 380 active collaborations in areas such as joint research, academic and student exchange.³ However, a number of Australian delegations have visited India but have often left without any firm commitment to proceed towards a particular collaborative practice. Indian delegations have similarly been disappointed in some of their efforts. In some instances, visiting Vice-Chancellors or high-level university or government officials sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or announce a joint initiative which then does not result in any further action. Nevertheless, the websites of many Australian and Indian universities boast a range of such arrangements, examples of some of which are provided below.

Scholarly Networks and Activities:

Most Australian universities have attempted to forge scholarly networks with Indian institutions of higher education leading to a range of activities, such as conferences and projects, built around shared interests. In the late 1990s, RMIT created a major project in conjunction with a number of universities in Kolkata, as well as various Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and unions. This project, *Tramjatra*, was designed to explore the multiple ways in which trams play in an important economic and cultural role in the social life of Melbourne and Kolkata. More recently, Deakin University has worked closely with the University of Hyderabad, organising a conference on international relations. Other scholarly activities have involved artistic collaborations, leading to public exhibitions and performances. Collaborative efforts have also resulted in development projects in rural and remote areas in India. A focus on public health has been noteworthy. However, these have often been one off initiatives, which despite the best of intentions, have not resulted in on-going partnerships.

Collaborative Research:

The Australian and Indian Government through the AISRF have supported 93 high-quality joint projects and 15 joint workshops across a broad range of areas of science, as well as a fellowship program for scientist exchange. The AISRF has brought together more than 90 top universities and research institutions on both sides and hundreds of researchers to help tackle the grand challenges of today, including in food and water security, environment, health and energy.

Articulation and Twinning:

More formally, a range of articulation arrangements have been negotiated between Australian universities and various private institutions of higher education in India. These arrangements involve Australian universities recognising studies undertaken at an Indian institution. This is necessarily a one-way arrangement, since Indian universities have no mechanism to recognise credits earned at other institutions India or overseas. In some cases, students complete part of a degree program in India, which may equate to a diploma, and articulates to a degree that can be completed in an institution in Australia, which would award the degree.

Student and Staff Exchanges:

A variety of arrangements for student and staff exchange have also been negotiated, though these have often proved to be difficult to sustain beyond one or two rounds of exchange. Arrangements include internships, study tours and cultural programs for international students, such as the Study in India Program (SIP) at the University of Hyderabad. The Australian Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education has a study overseas short term mobility program for eligible Australian university students, this program aims to increase collaboration between higher

³ www.australiaindiaeducation.com

education institutions. The Australian Government has also recently launched the AsiaBound Grants Program to support more than 10,000 Australian students to study in Asia. The specifics of these arrangements vary greatly in terms of purpose, institutional commitment, the depth of engagement, and the frequency and duration of the program. Opportunities have also existed for staff to visit partner institutions to participate in jointly held conferences, workshops and exhibitions, some of which are scheduled, recurring events, while others are ad hoc or one-off. Longer term sabbaticals are still rare. Staff visits sometimes also result from — or in — collaborative research activity.

Jointly Supervised PhD Programs:

Perhaps the most successful kind of collaborative program has been through joint research programs in which PhD students are jointly supervised by collaborating institutions. Typically the degree is awarded by the Australian university. Students spend most of the duration of their study in India, and often spend a semester or a year in Australia. Many such arrangements are currently flourishing. Deakin and RMIT universities are, for example, collaborating with universities such as the University of Hyderabad; public institutions, such as the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) Hyderabad, the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) Hyderabad, and the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Scientific Research (JNCASR) Bangalore; public-private institutions such as the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI); NGOs such as HelpAge India and Business Community Foundation (BCF); research institutes such as The Energy Research Institute (TERI), and corporations such as VIMTA, Biocon, Tata Steel, and ABB Corporate Research Centre, Bangalore.

The standard funding patterns sustaining this model are scholarships granted by Australian universities that involve waiving of tuition fees and a fully-funded six-month to one year stay in Australia. In return, the Indian partner hosts the student for the whole period of candidature, provides joint supervision, and covers the costs of research materials. Research outputs are shared by all parties involved, universities in both countries being particularly interested in publication outputs and PhD completions. The model has already resulted in a number of significant co-authored publications, patents and further research projects. However, issues sometimes develop around the ownership of intellectual property (IP).

University-Industry Partnerships:

*It was hard to convince them [industry] because they had never done this before, but over time they realised that it was a win-win situation for everybody
(Senior Administrator, Deakin Delhi Office)*

This mode of collaboration is already producing some significant partnerships, enabling both Indian and Australian universities to collaborate with commercial laboratories or research and development wings of corporations to work on research of mutual interest. Such efforts often involve PhD students affiliated to the participating university. The student is generally a company employee wishing to attain a higher degree matching the company's long-term human resource development plans. In India, part-time off-campus PhDs have not been an option; so this collaboration enables industry employees to pursue a PhD whilst employed. This model helps corporations retain good employees and develop their own research and development program.

Our interviewees reported that university-industry arrangements work well and are growing in popularity, despite the initial scepticism, particularly in India. However, it should be noted that this model is still relatively new with the first PhD completed at the end of 2012.

Joint Degrees:

Perhaps the most structured model of collaboration is a program resulting in a degree that is jointly awarded by collaborating institutions. The best-known and most successful example of such collaboration is the IITB-Monash Academy, an arrangement between two highly reputed universities, focused on the development of research capacity in both countries via a joint PhD program. The AISRF first supported this collaboration. The IITB-Monash Academy is located at the Indian Institute of

Technology, Bombay. Students enrolled in this program are jointly supervised by advisors in India as well as Australia, and spend a semester or a year at Monash University, Australia. A jointly badged degree is earned by students who complete their PhDs through this program.

Most of the collaborative research projects conducted at RMIT, Deakin and Monash universities are in science and technology. Increasingly, they are also interdisciplinary and involve attempts to solve problems important to emerging industries. Over the past decade, the major areas of collaborative activity have included nanotechnology, infrastructure engineering, biotechnology and stem cell research, water, clean energy, advanced computational engineering, and materials engineering.

Collaborative activities in the social sciences following this model have yet to be established, though the model's potential is clearly recognised. Until now, in the social sciences, interaction between Indian and Australian higher education appears to have taken a different trajectory with the creation of academic networks that encourage collaboration on issues of global relevance. Typically, social science collaborations have centred on jointly held conferences, sometimes resulting in publication.

These examples of collaboration suggest that there is no single model for the development of partnerships between Indian and Australian higher education, and that a range of good practices have emerged. In recent years, collaborative practices around research training and higher degrees by research appear to have been the most productive, whereas joint awards of Bachelors or Masters Degrees or vocational and skills education have yet to be established in any systematic fashion. With research partnerships, there is a greater interest in committing funds and the expected returns are seen as long term and not monetary. However with other programs, the motivation is commercial and immediate returns are expected.

There is a great deal of discussion among Indian and Australian universities about the potential of new technologies and online learning in forging collaborative links in teaching and research. However, this discussion is still at an early stage, and is centred not only on academic and practical issues but also on confusion surrounding government policy with respect to the approval the overseas universities need to offer online programs in India. In research, while internet and new communication media are used widely to keep in touch, the more far-reaching uses of new technologies in collecting and mining data, and creating new knowledge, are still being explored. So the potential benefits of collaboration using new technologies are widely recognised, but the systems needed to realise this potential have yet to be developed (interview, Planning Commission of India).

PERCEPTIONS OF BENEFIT

Perceptions about the benefits of collaboration between Indian and Australian institutions of higher education can of course be expected to vary across the two nations, and between different types of institutions. Institutional collaboration is increasingly viewed in India as an important mechanism for dealing with the various challenges that the Indian system of higher education faces. As already noted, the most significant of these challenges concerns the need to meet the rapidly growing demand by broadening the range of learning options available to students. Indeed, it is this logic that underpinned the introduction in India of its controversial (and now postponed) Foreign Institutions Bill. Foreign institutions, the Bill suggested, had the potential to expand access to quality higher education within India, for which many Indian students now go abroad. More importantly, the Bill viewed global inputs as a way of improving the quality of Indian higher education itself, through the introduction of various new instruments of global benchmarking and quality assurance. Through direct comparisons and competition, Indian institutions, it maintained, would be able to identify areas that needed improvement and provide appropriate training and professional development.

*In some sense there are walls, cultural walls that need to be broken. Philosophically and academically these are absolute necessities for India to look outward and actually attract people to come in ... a lot of people are after diaspora ... for example, my own students go abroad, I would like them to come back and contribute here with their new ideas, completely different perspectives, higher energy levels and a more practical outlook.
(Senior Academic & Administrator, University of Hyderabad)*

More broadly, the benefits of international collaboration in India are viewed against the backdrop of a set of priorities aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, creating conditions for improving research productivity and training, and overhauling the governance practices of its higher education institutions. Several initiatives surrounding these priorities have already resulted in some significant shifts in institutional practices. However, Indian authorities have increasingly argued that international collaborations can greatly enhance the processes of reform. They recognise that while a wide variety of interests, some social, political or economic, motivate overseas universities and systems to want to collaborate with Indian institutions of higher education, collaborations can only benefit India if they are based on the principles of mutuality, reciprocity and genuine cooperation.

According to a number of interviewees in India, there is still some suspicion in India about Australia's interest in developing academic collaborations with Indian institutions of higher education. It is assumed that Australia's motivations are largely economic and are driven by an interest in making Australian universities more attractive to Indian fee-paying students; and that expressions of Australian interest in India are designed to enhance its reputation as a favored destination among Indian students, many of whom still do not perceive Australia as a global leader in higher education, despite its many excellent universities (interview, University of Hyderabad). This view is clearly not accurate but long-standing misperceptions are hard to shift, and are not helped by adverse events such as the attacks on Indian students in Melbourne, or the exaggerated media reports about these attacks.

They [Indian scientists] do things slightly differently from what we do, but it is complementary and ... I think it is fantastic to have these interactions with different countries and different cultures ... In terms of the science, we [Deakin University] do a bit more of molecular biology and they do more physiological, environmental studies. They have a fantastic background in environmental issues, they liaise with industry groups that are interested in remediation... they have ongoing programs where science is applied to local environmental issues They have taken science out of the laboratories; that is something I have never been able to do here. (Senior Researcher, Deakin University)

Australia is clearly keen to develop a more robust set of relationships within its region for reasons beyond the commercial. The recently published *Australia in the Asian Century* White Paper, for example, suggests that Australia needs to stay relevant, and increase its presence in Asia in a number of spheres, most particularly public diplomacy, by developing, among other initiatives, higher educational ties with the Asian systems of

education. The White Paper argues that such links have the potential to give Australia dividends beyond merely financial benefits.

In Australia, higher education collaboration is viewed as having a much broader purpose. With the changing patterns of knowledge production and exchange, the changing demands from a distributed and diverse student body, and the changing pedagogic possibilities of new technologies and media, Australian authorities have recognised the need to engage in innovative practices, which are located not only within the national but also the transnational space. In the area of research and research training in particular, international collaborations, they have suggested, other opportunities that enable institutions in both Australia and India to develop research capacity, work on regional and global problems and find and share resources needed to remain competitive.

Without exception, our interviewees reported that they perceived international collaborations as not only inevitable, but highly desirable. Based on their experience of joint programs in research training, our interviewees emphasised that collaborations:

- Provided Indian students opportunities to undertake an international PhD program;
- Enhanced the chances of publication and impact; collaborative publications result in greater visibility and citation;
- Improved institutional and research practices; these became richer through learning from each other;
- Made research processes faster and more cost effective through sharing of data, insights and IP;
- Enabled access to necessary infrastructure and sharing of resources and expertise;
- Enhanced capacities and provided a broader skill base through access to each other's networks;
- Energized and encouraged professional growth through sharing of knowledge and working with trusted colleagues; and
- Led to greater cultural awareness and promoted inter-cultural understanding.

Collaborative interactions have also given rise to entirely new institutions, such as IITB-Monash Academy in Mumbai, Deakin India Research Initiative (DIRI) in Delhi, the IICT-RMIT centre in Hyderabad, and the Deakin research centres. They have led to better opportunities for funding. International consortia are able to bid for greater levels of funding, enabling the development of large scale programs, especially where systems and bureaucratic arrangements are well established, as with research-mature institutions. Institutions across large networks can improve competitiveness on grant applications.

NGOs possess a lot of data but often do not know what to do with it, so partnerships with academic institutions become valuable in this regard. Given the networks of over 50 NGOs that BCF [Business and Community Foundation] has, academic rigour gets applied through the courses BCF delivers. This also augments confidence of NGOs to network and participate in wider national and international circles. (Senior Administrator, Business & Community Foundation, India)

Collaborations also have the potential to address social and developmental issues by bringing together universities, government, civil society and industry in order to understand and solve specific problems. The synergy between academic and non-government organisations enables partners to combine efforts to work on specific problems. Collaborations facilitate access to various networks, including local NGOs and activist groups, thus providing an opportunity to become involved in training and research activities of policy relevance. Such interactions can translate into capacity building for both NGOs and universities.

Partnerships among multiple organisations produce synergy, enhancing actors' capacity to strategically influence national and bilateral policy. For instance, PHFI has gradually engaged with other public health institutions in other South Asian countries, building a necessary network upon which to form a consortium with Australian universities and AusAID. Collaborative research also benefits industries as it enables access to cutting edge technology, highly skilled manpower and access to new knowledge. Industry also gets an opportunity to retain expertise, as collaborative models enable employees to complete their PhD without leaving their employment. Other important benefits are commercialisation of research outputs and access to international markets and channels of bilateral trade. With the notion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) gathering momentum in India, especially with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs implementing the New Companies Bill in 2013, industry may have an extra incentive to engage in non-commercial research activities, potentially serving as a new source of funds for university-led research.

Research students we interviewed in both Australia and India indicated the enormous value they derived from collaborations with respect to their professional and career development. They pointed to such benefits as opportunities they had of being a student of two institutions and an international qualification that gave them exposure to different academic cultures and supervisory styles. They also commented on the importance of interacting with industry across two countries, and being part of interdisciplinary teams focused on applied research, enhancing their capacities and confidence.

Both Australian and Indian universities viewed collaboration as a necessary pathway to their internationalisation agendas. When only understood as an inflow of foreign universities into India, internationalisation is perceived as a threat by many. However, others see it as an opportunity India must seize, as a way of rejuvenating Indian universities by attracting more foreign students, as well as encouraging Indian students to take part in exchange or joint programs. The University Grants Commission of India is currently working on replicating the successful Study in India Program (SIP) based at the University of Hyderabad, as one way to foster internationalisation of Indian higher education. International collaborations are a way to widen the scope of such programs.

It is generally agreed that Indian students, especially in science and technology, are drawn to overseas universities because of the quality of their infrastructure and facilities, such as research labs and technology precincts. But in the field of social sciences and humanities, it is the international community that is drawn to India because of its richness and complexity. At the University of Hyderabad, for example, the bulk of international students join courses in the social sciences and humanities. The challenge facing collaborative programs is how to bring the respective strengths of the two countries together in a synergistic approach that is interdisciplinary, and does not view disciplinary knowledge of science and technology as separate from social and cultural issues.

This discussion has demonstrated abundant benefits of collaborations between Indian and Australian higher education, especially in areas of research and research training. Without exception, interviewees in this review spoke positively of their experiences of collaboration, even if their perceptions of the benefits of collaborations varied. They spoke of the ways in which collaborations have led to their own professional development, contributing not only to their research and publications but their administrative and intercultural skills. Yet each of the interviewees also pointed to the barriers they encountered within both their own institutions and in imagining the wider application of their understanding of the nature and potential of institutional collaborations to other contexts. In what follows we discuss some of these barriers.

BARRIERS TO COLLABORATIONS

Although collaborative work is seen as desirable and even imperative in this globalised knowledge era, several challenges confront individuals and institutions that seek to engage in collaborative partnerships. The challenges are different depending on the nature and purpose of the partnership, and as we elaborate below, some of the deeper engagements, such as joint research programs and collaborative PhD programs, paradoxically, appear to face fewer challenges, once established, than some of the apparently less complex arrangements such as student exchange.

Many collaborative arrangements, especially research partnerships, begin with (sometimes serendipitous) face-to-face engagements. They often result from exchange of ideas between individuals with mutual interests, mutual respect and mutual trust. The work of collaborative research — of exchanging ideas, of jointly addressing a problem through research — even of seeking funds for collaboration — these, our respondents inform us, are extremely motivating. Researchers are enthusiastic about finding more opportunities to do such work. The people involved are often senior academics with both experience and some level of authority to initiate projects. Because of the personal connection and interest in the collaboration, they work hard to mobilise institutional support and resources to facilitate their collaborative project. So the challenges of making such collaborations work come from elsewhere — from the institutions involved or from the powers that govern the institutions, such as state and national policies.

Support from national policies and priorities is needed for collaborations to succeed. Unless strategies specifically focus on encouraging collaborations with particular countries, providing grant money to foster collaborations, exchange of academics and scholarships for research students, such collaborations become very difficult to promote. While Australia is focused on collaboration with India and has put in place schemes that encourage such collaboration, with several universities prepared to fully fund PhD students including the cost of their travel to Australia and their stay in Australia for a semester or even a year, in India the commitment to collaborate with Australian institutions of higher education is still evolving.

The uncertainty and lack of clarity around the policies and rules regarding the operation of foreign universities in India is a major challenge. Even as certain forms of collaboration are able to go ahead, other types must await the verdict of the long delayed passing of the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill. This has led to a level of uncertainty and lack of confidence on the part of overseas institutions, which the Indian government has more recently sought to clarify. For example, in 2011, the University Grants Commission (UGC) announced its decision to allow only those universities listed in the top 500 of the Times Higher Education or the Shanghai Jiao Tong to collaborate with Indian universities. Although half of Australia's universities fell within this list, it created some uncertainty for the other half. More recently, because the UGC has put a hold on this decision, many institutions remain wary of developing collaborations.

Issue around recognition of credits is another major challenge to partnerships. Currently, Indian universities do not give credits to their students for courses they have completed at another university. There is no arrangement to assess equivalences or to allow the credits to be accepted. This means that students are not able to travel for a semester or two to study in an Australian university or even at another Indian university. This restricts the range of collaborations that can be set up.

[For collaborations to work], we need, number one, benefits for both the partners — equity — if you have a dominant partner, then it doesn't work. And I would believe the most important thing is trust. (Senior Researcher, Public Health Foundation of India)

Despite 'excellence' being a mantra in education in both India and Australia, gauging the quality of institutions and programs is not that easy. Quality control and accreditation measures, particularly in India, are not well formed or enforced. Accreditation is not compulsory. According to some interviewees in Australia, there is no system whereby Australian universities can confidently move forward to explore engagement with Indian institutions based on some form of reliable accreditation. So potential collaborations might never even begin, let alone fructify.

The skewed nature of funding patterns — coupled with a legacy of sensitivity in India about the possibilities of neo-colonial exploitation, — creates certain suspicions or perceptions of asymmetry of knowledge and power. Although all the interviewees in our study emphasised the importance of mutual trust and respect, the very fact that this was so remarkable a feature spoke of how carefully interactions needed to be negotiated. In this scenario, given that India has many partners to choose from, potential collaboration opportunities may be easily lost due to insensitivity, over-sensitivity or inadvertent offence. Skewed funding patterns could reinforce such asymmetries.

It is hard to deny that the media perceptions of safety and security, and even the management of the bilateral relationships between India and Australia, have impacted collaborations between the two countries in recent years, especially following the attacks on Indian students in 2009–2010. It has been widely noted by interviewees in both India and Australia that these attacks, and the resulting media hysteria surrounding the events, could have been one of the reasons of a decline in the number of Indian students attending universities in Australia.

Currently, India has become the focus of attention for many universities around the world because of its pool of talented students particularly in the sciences, and given India's increasing economic presence. When there is a choice of universities from around the world with which to partner, collaborations with Australia might face challenges from a perception among some in India about Australian universities and society. Although half of Australia's universities are ranked highly, universities in the United States of America and the United Kingdom are often considered more prestigious or of higher quality in India. Moreover, Australian society has been painted by some parts of the Indian media as unwelcoming despite Indians representing the highest proportion of new immigrants and second highest number of international students to Australia in recent years.⁴ These perceptions could also inhibit collaborations between the two countries.

At the institutional level, our interviewees pointed to a number of other challenges. A proposed project, for example, may not fit with the institutions' priorities, plans or budgets. Many institutions are now governed by complex administrative systems which can be quite rigid and unimaginative in their requirements, and find their systems and requirements incompatible with those of the partnering institution. Computer software used for such things as enrollments make it difficult for students temporarily on a different campus, for example, to be enrolled, affecting a host of things that depend on enrollment status, such as marking attendance, or being able to access the library or avail of concessions etc.

The commitment of the Australian university's leadership, particularly the Vice Chancellors (VC), towards collaboration with India was frequently cited as a pre-requisite for the success of collaboration. Conversely, if a VC moved or the strategy changed, collaborations between India and Australia might suffer irrespective of the merit of the project and the enthusiasm of those involved. The issue of differences in institutional and cultural practices were widely noted and commented upon by our interviewees, both in India and in Australia. The obvious issues of mis-communication, missing cultural nuances, differences in the pace of work, differences in the expectations of relations and communication between colleagues and between academics and students were also noted. The Australian fastidiousness with regard to ethics applications was commented upon, as was the Indian laxity with getting certain documents processed on time. The differing understanding of what was agreed upon in meetings was mentioned. However, these were noted more as points of interest than obstacles, more often spoken of with an affectionate shake of the head than with frustration. Our respondents indicated that these frustrations could be gradually overcome.

4 aei.gov.au/research; <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/pdf/report-on-migration-program-2011-12.pdf>

[There are] forms ... for everything that happens — whether you take leave, whether you are enrolled in the program, whether you are a supervisor that's changing, whether it is an extension of your scholarship or candidature — for anything you need to have approvals. That is the challenging bit for students because we are also a little careful about our students — because it has to go into the system, it has to be really perfect. Once it is done here [in India], it goes to [the partnering institution in Australia] and then it is logged over there. (University Administration Manager)

The administrative processes in any institution of higher education are already complex, and when two institutions collaborate, these complexities multiply enormously. One administration manager mentioned that a joint program required 23 different forms to be filled in. The amount of time administration and logistics takes is often underestimated; conversely, institutions that have invested in dedicated administrative services to facilitate collaboration, such as Deakin University, with their experienced staff in the Delhi Office, are able to promote collaborations with much greater ease.

A related issue is that of time. The initial time needed for any kind of collaboration to start and for the paperwork to be worked out, is often underestimated. Sometimes arrangements collapse because not enough time has been made available for the logistics to be worked out. But time matters in another way as well. Collaborations take time to yield benefits, and attempts to measure the value of collaborations too quickly may lead to misleading conclusions. With universities and other types of institutions routinely needing to justify investments on a regular — annual — basis, program support cannot be guaranteed if returns come in several years down the line, or are of a nature that are either not easily quantifiable, or not recognised as valuable in institutional key performance indicators. A further issue with time is that as time goes by, people move institutions and their own interests might change. Given the centrality of individual relationships, these shifts can challenge the continuity of collaborations.

Sometimes, efforts to develop a project may encounter difficulties when it becomes apparent that the institutions involved have differing expectations and aspirations. For instance, one institution may seek to engage in research purely for the sake of advancing knowledge, while the other seeks to develop a commercial product. Some of the partnerships now involve a university and an industry or business. The collaboration may consist of an agreed joint research interest. PhD students may be signed on to work on the project. However, while the university may be willing to allow students time to think and to follow their interest, the industry partner may attempt to steer the project towards issues of more immediate interest to them. Thus the project may get pushed in different directions, to the detriment of the students.

Several interviewees, in the sciences and social sciences, indicated how difficult it was to move from collaborations that were limited to the interest of a few individuals to spreading the interest — and the collaborations — throughout their institutions. This is particularly the case with research collaborations; researchers may work across nations with each other, but often they may not be collaborating with colleagues at their own institutions. This has meant that collaborations have brought only limited benefits to institutions, remaining often at individual rather than institutional level. Moreover, this made the relationship between the institutions in question vulnerable.

Student 1: That is a hellish recipe [when joint supervision doesn't work]... Basically you have to be tactical about that and put both of them on the [same] page; try to bridge that gap.

Student 2: You need to choose [the right] set of words...

Student 3: It has become part of your PhD actually, managing supervisors.

Student 4: But at the end of the day it works well.

Student 5: But there are cases when the two supervisors go in different directions... then you just have to start ignoring [that]...

(PhD students)

Joint supervision of PhD students was seen as sometimes challenging. In one of the partnerships, students reported that they had been supervised by as many as eight supervisors during the course of their study. Expectations of supervisors and students varied with institutional cultures — as a result, students needed to learn how to adapt to these differences. In the case of transdisciplinary or multidisciplinary research, the supervisors were not only from different cultures, but also different fields, with only the student forming the link between the supervisors. To succeed in such arrangements, students need to be self-directed and committed, and able to adapt to multiple cultures and expectations.

If you fund institutions that already have all those conversations [around IP] inbuilt in them, then you leapfrog the IP discussion, the governance discussion, and the project management discussion; all these are already contained in the framework of the institution. So when governments want to look at such cross-country collaborations they are much better off funding institutions that have got all of this in place so that the money can directly go to research (Senior Administrator, IITB Mumbai)

Increasingly, issues relating to intellectual property (IP) are becoming apparent as a challenge. Sometimes arrangements around IP or commercial advantage or patents arising from collaborative work are not clarified at the outset, so that issues arise at a later stage and need to be sorted out. Given the novelty of these situations, the actors involved are not always aware of the rules and may make assumptions which may not be supported by the law.

The opportunity to collaborate across disciplines was frequently cited as an exciting aspect of collaborative research. However, the level of interdisciplinary collaboration was limited in the case-study sites, and limited in most cases to two science disciplines. Wider collaboration across the natural and social sciences was not evident, even when areas of interest included such topics as water or food security. Limited understandings and a limited imagination with regard to 'interdisciplinarity' have posed challenges to realising the potential of this form of collaborative research.

CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS

In our interviews in both India and Australia, we focused not only various barriers to institutional collaborations but also on conditions of success –what needed to be done to develop collaborations and ensure that they are educationally and culturally productive. In what follows, we discuss some of the impressions collected.

In India, new initiatives such as the innovation universities provide examples of high quality institutions, but such autonomous institutions are special cases — exceptions — and cannot be scaled up to become the norm. Strategies for ‘scaling up’ reforms beyond the few select universities to include provincial universities and their affiliated colleges are needed. The question of how institutional collaborations forged by a few select central universities and institutes might assist in shifting the thinking and practices in higher education speedily and organically throughout the system, without exacerbating existing nation-wide problems or creating new ones, must be carefully considered.

Australia too needs to engage in new thinking about institutional collaborations. Over the past two decades, the structure of Australia higher education has undergone major changes leading to shifts in the organisation of academic work, curriculum, pedagogy and practices of governance. Perhaps the most crucial factor in steering these changes has been the declining levels of public funding for higher education to meet the costs of a rapid increase in student demand. Institutions of higher education have had to find new sources of income.

With its well-established and high quality system of education, Australian higher education has sought to fill the revenue gap by attracting large numbers of overseas students. However, the nervousness generated by the stiff and growing market competition in global higher education has led Australian higher education to re-think its international strategy. Arguably, seeking greater collaborative engagements in higher education within its region, including India, is at least partly a component of this strategy. But India is increasingly becoming attractive to a number of other overseas collaborators, so the question for Australian higher education is how to consolidate its existing collaboration in the face of growing competition, and expand others.

To do so, Australian institutions of higher education recognise the need to move beyond commercially-motivated collaborations and to imagine new forms that respond to the fundamental global shifts in emerging global practices of knowledge production and exchange and India’s locally specific social and economic problems. This suggests the need to forge deeper links with not only institutions but also their communities. It needs to be very nimble and innovative in forging new forms of collaboration to remain competitive globally. To get the wider benefits of institutional collaborations, it is increasingly realised that Australian institutions of higher education would need to work more closely to address various local and global problems. For collaborations to be effective there must be a genuine mutual interest in the investigation, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of local and global issues (environmental issues, health, education, food, water, and energy security) beyond the instrumental pursuit of short-term financial and other gains. While an important outcome of institutional collaboration would be the preparation of workers better equipped to deal with the requirements of the global labor market, there also needs to be a strategic focus on the existing local economies as well as on fostering new centres of economic activity, especially in the case of India.

The links that institutions of Australian higher education have been able to develop in India have largely been with the established metropolitan institutions. The question arises as to how they might also embrace learning spaces in regional and rural areas in India in ways that are beyond replication and scale-up models, to involve marginalised groups, and to promote dialogues that help communities in both Australia and India localise globalisation. Much of the discussion on collaborations centres on the knowledge economy paradigm; however, the concept needs to be explored against local realities in order to assess its relevance so that the promotion of knowledge is

viewed as a means of both individual and collective social empowerment over simply the formation of human capital. There needs to be a space in which it is possible to negotiate collaborations outside existing political economic power relationships between India and Australia.

Amidst the rush to promote the expansion of the higher education system to meet India's skills development needs and the formation of human capital, the more meaningful underpinning of education as a social empowerment tool has perhaps been relegated to a secondary place. The Asian Century might be a new opportunity for India to re-calibrate the power equation with Australia; nevertheless, partnerships are still formulated in specific contexts where economic interests tend to have the last say. But if institutional collaboration is to have wider application, then ways must be found to make it more inclusive. Yet participatory processes that allow for the articulation of local knowledge to find its way to policy processes are long-term, costly exercises and subject to political complexities and exigencies. In thinking beyond the current models of institutional collaboration, there is clearly a need to imagine and support links that benefit more than the metropolitan elite; links that provide some room for experimentation and risk, in both India and Australia.

Both countries need to clarify their own purposes of institutional collaboration, aligning them to both existing policy realities and future ambitions. Importantly, however, if higher education policies and practices are to be interpreted more generally as practices of knowledge production, distribution and exchange, it might become necessary to think beyond current categories of institutions and sectors and to visualise collaborations as not only between institutions of higher education but also industry partners, government agencies, knowledge brokers, non-government organisations and of course the communities in both metropolitan and rural centres.

In the earlier cases, yes, [people would come to my office when they wanted to start a collaboration], but now we are saying 'bottom up' — find something you would like to do and then come to us if you need to have an understanding at a higher level. Earlier the case was that they come here and they would have a broad Memorandum of Understanding and nothing happens, five years later it is just a piece of paper. But now we want to do bottom up; so that's the model now. Most of the time, it starts with a joint workshop or conference which brings people together and then it builds up; that seems to be the most successful model. (Senior Administrator, University of Hyderabad)

Alongside these conceptual issues, any account of institutional collaborations also demands an assessment of the collaborative links that are already in place, with respect to the challenges faced and outcomes achieved. This review represents an attempt to do this. However, further work is warranted, with more detailed case studies and accounts of best practice, including attempts to explain why a large number of attempts to collaborate never get beyond the stage of signing a MoU. Currently, collaborative arrangements between India and other nations number in the thousands — but most of these are either inactive or have minimal impact. Several problems of implementation have been highlighted, and these provide some hints as to the conditions under which collaborations might be successfully forged.

For collaborations to succeed, the time needed to set up and run successful collaborative projects should not be underestimated. Care should be taken to clarify and work with differing academic and cultural traditions. In particular, clarity and coordination around nomenclature, grading systems, and accreditation processes is imperative. Among others, the following help to create conditions of success, or at a minimum, to mitigate the challenges that are frequently encountered:

- Ensure clarity in the purposes, responsibilities and rewards being sought by each party, and identifying the synergies in the same;
- Negotiate and resolve issues of evaluation, especially against competing interests and goals;
- Understand and accommodate cultural differences — particularly in organisational culture and student and staff work cultures; and
- Take care to avoid a neo-colonial approach in which collaborators are not seen as equal partners.

However, even if all of these precautions are heeded at the institutional level, institutional collaborations often enjoy only limited success because there is no clarity over policies and regulations governing international

linkages. In the case of Australia, although shifts in policy may significantly affect funding patterns and provisions, by and large there is stability and clarity in policies and practices. The situation is a lot more complex in India. It is still not clear whether the bills pending with regard to the operation of foreign tertiary institutions in India might serve to provide some clarity. If India wants to harness collaborations, in particular, to improve access and create more equitable provision it will need to identify and change policies and practices that inhibit the confidence of overseas collaborators.

The most important requisites for collaboration, our interviewees noted, were trust and respect between the collaborating partners. Unless collaborating partners could rely on each other, and could trust each others' intent and ability, collaborations would fall through. Respect also included recognition of each others' strengths. Many interviewees also reported the importance of such things as being treated with courtesy and having personal connections and friendships. Being received personally at the airport, or being invited to a colleague's home, enhanced the feeling of being respected and valued. Closely associated to this was the need for confidence that the collaboration was seen as being of mutual benefit, and there was symmetry and equity in the relationships.

Complementarity of expertise and resources was also highly valued by those engaging in collaborations. In many instances, joint research was based on laboratory facilities, the availability of particular machines, or on the expertise of particular individuals. Most important for the many collaborative PhD programs is the need in Australia for suitable students, and the availability of such students in India.

Clarity on what is being envisaged and on expectations and roles are important not only to push tentative ideas into formal arrangements, but also for sustaining interest and furthering collaborative work. Understanding each others' priorities is important for negotiating issues that may come up. Understanding constraints that each collaborating partner faces — including institutional and national policy constraints, as well as cultural constraints — is equally important. Of course, all the concerned institutions also need to be aware of national priorities and funding opportunities to plan future collaborations strategically.

A robust and creative set of administrative procedures with adequate and dedicated administrative personnel focused on trouble-shooting and removing obstacles is essential. Just as it is important for academic staff to have a personal connection, for administrative staff to travel to the partner nation and to meet with those involved in the other institution face to face would be an extremely rewarding investment. For Australian universities having an office in India, as Deakin University does, appears to bear great dividends. Not only has it enabled Deakin University to develop a range of collaborations, it has also enhanced the visibility and reputation in India. The people in the office have grown to be cultural interpreters and ambassadors, easing the way for those involved in collaborations and for those attempting to develop them.

Strategies to improve joint supervision of students also need to be considered to minimize the stress on students, and to ensure that students in collaborative arrangements have optimum conditions. Joint supervision strategies would likely improve with experience — most of collaborative PhD programs are still quite new and everyone involved is still working out how to go about it. But even students attached to a single university struggle with supervision arrangements sometimes — and strategies to get student feedback are not that effective, given the asymmetries between the situations of students and supervisors, and issues can be compounded when students are working across diverse institutional arrangements, expectations, cultures and competing priorities.

One of the most frequently cited reasons for persisting with efforts to collaborate, in the face of obstacles, was the strength of the personal relationship and the joy of working with people whom one respects and trusts. Institutions are recognising this, and encouraging initiatives started by individuals to begin to take root before any formal MoUs are signed. In recent times, India has played host or has been the venue for a number of conferences and gatherings — such events provide the opportunities necessary for face-to-face meetings and developing the prospects of collaborative work. Australian universities generally provide more opportunities to academics to

attend conferences overseas — collaborations would be enhanced if more institutions in India were to similarly encourage their academics to travel overseas and further their networks through funding such travels. In general, co-hosting conferences or locating conferences in Australia and in India would enhance the prospects for collaborations.

Most of the collaborative engagements that are working successfully involve joint research and PhD programs. The model of Australian universities recruiting PhD students in India, to work with partner institutions in India for the award of an Australian degree is beginning to meet with some success. However, the range of other possibilities that exist have not been adequately explored, or have been under-exploited. Programs involving professional development in higher education teaching, various training programs and student exchanges offer great potential which may be explored in coming years, especially as Australia's profile grows more positive in India. The major obstacle to some student exchange programs is that Indian universities do not accept transfers of credits from other universities — this inflexibility is one India simply cannot afford if it wants to improve program offerings and raise the quality of the higher education experience for Indian students. Australian institutions, are presently under-utilising courses in India as a way of internationalising their offerings. Almost all major Indian universities offer a large number of courses in Religion, Literature, Arts and Humanities. Australian universities should consider making arrangements to offer versions of these courses to Australian students as a way of helping them become more 'India-literate'.

Related to this is the opportunity that Australia needs to seize for raising the profile of India Studies as a subject in Australian universities. Given the growing importance of India and Australia's focus on the region, there is surprising decline in interest on the part of students to engage in India Studies. Nor is there an interest on the part of universities to encourage this in any significant way. There is an opportunity here for other forms of collaboration, including student exchange that may also boost India Studies programs through interesting collaborative programs which include a term or two in India. Similarly, Australia Studies are almost non-existent in India — exchange programs could make such a program more attractive and attract students to such courses.

There is tremendous scope for more interdisciplinary research, particularly research across the natural and social sciences, of which there is very little currently in evidence. Collaborative work that is focused on problem solving — particularly of intractable problems of global importance — are very attractive to institutions. Collaborations coalesce around such problems. However, these are still collaborations that involve two branches of the natural sciences; the humanities are little involved in such collaborations.

The flexibility offered by Australian universities is a great asset to furthering collaboration. Australian universities have far more autonomy in the recruitment of students and in accepting credits transferred from other institutions.

There are also partnerships between Australian universities and private industries; here, again, the flexibility offered by Australian PhD programs must take credit. Industry employees who are interested in doing a PhD would need to give up their jobs to study if they were to attend an Indian university. Paradoxically, if they choose a university far away from their homes, in Australia, they are able to combine their study with their work as the university partners with the industry to afford research opportunities for the student within the workplace. These partnerships may become increasingly useful as a way of drawing upon other sources of funds; corporate bodies are increasingly focusing on their own social responsibility and are likely to become more interested in supporting such collaborations in the years to come.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report examined a range of issues relating to the potential, possibilities and problems of institutional collaboration between Indian and Australian institutions of higher education. It suggests that while both India and Australia recognise the significance of the political dynamics of globalisation in re-forming and re-shaping their systems of higher education, their perspectives on international collaborations are not the same — nor are their interests and capacities. These differences have given rise to various contrasting perceptions of benefits of institutional collaboration. There is thus a need to create spaces in which opportunities exist to learn about similarities and differences, and points of convergence, across the two systems of higher education. The development of collaborative arrangements that are characterised by the principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit requires a better understanding of the emerging modes of collaborations, the obstacles that are repeatedly confronted, and the broader conditions of success. There is also a need to recognise that there is no single formula of success and that productive collaboration cannot be achieved without patience, trust and long term commitment to respectful dialogue and experimentation.

Recommendation 1

Indian and Australian universities should be encouraged to expand the repertoire of collaborations. Pilot projects that explore collaborations in professional development in higher education teaching would be extremely useful. This is an area where Australia is in a position to offer its expertise, and it is a way to make a difference across the board in higher education, rather than in ways that are restricted to particular institutions. As well, various training programs and student exchanges offer great potential which may be explored in coming years, especially as Australia's profile grows more positive in India.

Recommendation 2

The major obstacle to some student exchange programs is that Indian universities do not accept transfers of credits from other universities — this inflexibility is one India simply cannot afford if it wants to improve program offerings and raise the quality of the higher education experience for Indian students. A concerted effort to explore how, at least in a limited way, credit transfer is made possible between a few select institutions would be useful.

Recommendation 3

Australian institutions are presently underutilising courses in India as a way of internationalising their offerings. Particularly given the recent White Paper's focus on Asia, Australian universities can collaborate with Indian universities to develop rich experiences for their students.

Recommendation 4

Related to this is the opportunity that Australia needs to seize for raising the profile of India Studies as a subject in Australian universities. Given the growing importance of India and Australia's focus on the region, there is surprising decline in interest on the part of students to engage in India Studies. Nor is there an interest on the part of universities to encourage this in any significant way. There is an opportunity here for other forms of collaboration, including student exchange, which may also boost India Studies programs through interesting collaborative options which include a term or two in India. Similarly, Australia Studies are almost non-existent in India — exchange programs could attract students successfully to such courses.

Recommendation 5

There is tremendous scope for more interdisciplinary research between Australia and India, particularly research across the natural and social sciences, of which there is very little currently in evidence.

Recommendation 6

Some of the new industry-university partnerships should be studied and monitored carefully. Based on their success such partnerships should be encouraged as they may become increasingly useful as a way of drawing upon other sources of funds; corporate bodies are increasingly focusing on their own social responsibility and are likely to become more interested in supporting such collaborations in the years to come.

Recommendation 7

Australian and Indian educational authorities should consider facilitating a series of workshops that explore the pedagogic possibilities of the new technologies and social media in forging new practices of collaboration between Indian and Australian universities.

Recommendation 8

A jointly funded program should be created, with support from the two governments as well as corporate and other private sources, promoting innovations in activities that investigate and encourage new modes of engagement and collaboration.

Most institutional collaborations between Indian and Australian institutions of higher education are still occurring on an ad-hoc basis, with institutions working out arrangements as they go along. Often their success could be greatly enhanced by a helpful infrastructure, with a capacity to encourage and facilitate Australia-India institutional collaborations in higher education. But to set up such supports, careful, mutual understanding of issues is necessary. To facilitate such understanding, AIEC will continue to have an important role to play in creating new paces for dialogue, where the opportunities and challenges of institutional collaboration can be openly examined, and the possibilities freely explored, providing accounts of, and a guide to, best practices in India-Australia collaborations in higher education.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INSTITUTIONS CONSULTED

Australia

International Office, Deakin University Burwood Campus, Melbourne
International Research Initiatives and International Partnerships, Deakin University, Melbourne
Institute for Technology Research Innovation (ITRI), Deakin University, Melbourne
School of International and Community Engagement, Deakin University, Melbourne
School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University, Melbourne
School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Deakin University, Melbourne
Centre for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Sciences, Deakin University, Melbourne
School of Accounting, Economics and Finance, Deakin University, Melbourne
International Partnerships Coordination, Deakin University, Melbourne
Faculty of Engineering, Monash University, Melbourne
International Office, Monash University, Melbourne
School of Engineering, Royal Melbourne University of Technology, Melbourne
School of Design, Royal Melbourne University of Technology, Melbourne

India

Business and Community Foundation (BCF), Delhi
Business Development, Deakin University Delhi Office, Delhi
Research and Partnerships, Deakin University Delhi Office, Delhi
Help Age, Delhi
Australia India Education Council, Australian High Commission, Delhi
Australian Education International, Australian High Commission, Delhi
Biotec and Management of Resources Division, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Delhi
Centre for Mycorrhizal Research, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Delhi
Higher Education Policy, Planning Commission of India, Delhi
Public Health Education, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), Delhi
Academic Programs, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), Delhi
International Office, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB), Mumbai
Academic Executive Coordination, IITB-Monash Academy, Mumbai
Academic Programs, IITB-Monash Academy, Mumbai
Academic Office, IITB-Monash Academy, Mumbai
Management Division, Centre for Chemical and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad

Inorganic and Physical Chemistry Division, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), Hyderabad

Research and Management Division, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), Hyderabad

Department of Sociology - Study in India Program, University of Hyderabad

Office of International Affairs, University of Hyderabad

Department of Political Sciences, University of Hyderabad

Research Department, ABB Global Industries and Services Limited, Corporate Research Centre, Bangalore

Theoretical Sciences Unit, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bangalore

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