

**The Limits of Massification in the Asia Pacific Region.**

**APHERP Seminar**

**13 – 14 November 2015**

**Massification of Higher Education, Graduate Employment and Social Mobility:  
East Asian Perspectives**

Professor MOK Ka Ho, Joshua, Vice President, Chair Professor of Comparative Policy

Dr. JIANG Jin, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Sociology and Social Policy

Lingnan University

***Abstract:***

Globalisation and the evolution of the knowledge-based economy have caused dramatic worldwide changes in the character and functions of education, particularly higher education. In the search for global competitiveness, many emerging economies have begun to expand their higher education systems, which have significantly affected the relationship between higher education and graduate employment. Recently, international comparative studies have suggested that increasing enrolment in higher education does not always promote upward social mobility, and can intensify inequality in education. This article critically examines the impact of the expansion of higher education in East Asia on graduate employment and social mobility in the context of an increasingly globalising economy and changing labour market needs. It discusses emerging trends in the East Asian region and argues that the massification of higher education has not necessarily led to more occupational opportunities for youth or opportunities for upward social movement, particularly since the significant changes in the global labour market after the 2008 global financial crisis. On the contrary, the intensification of ‘positional competition’ among college graduates seems to reflect growing social inequality. The article also discusses what major strategies that East Asian higher education systems have adopted in addressing the challenges for the mismatch between university education and the labour market.

## **Service-Learning as a Necessary Co-curriculum in the Massification in Higher Education**

Professor MA Hok Ka, Carol  
Associate Director, Office of Service-Learning &  
Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Policy  
Lingnan University

### ***Abstract:***

Universities worldwide carry a common function of training people for sustaining a high quality supply of labour. However, the massification of Higher Education (HE) has made a detour for easier acquirement of a university (academic) qualification but failed to address what the society needs, both in terms of labour supply and in making a contribution to the community. Thus, HE becomes commoditizing knowledge for commercialization and training students for the demands of a globalized capitalist economy focusing on paper qualifications. Those with the financial means can easily acquire qualifications leading to a less equal distribution of education resources.

In order to redress this imbalance, HE has been impacted by a world movement for Service-Learning (S-L) - an applied learning experience for students to integrate their academic knowledge and serve to the community. The benefits of S-L for the intellectual and personal development of students, as well as its value as a platform for campus-community partnerships, have been much proved to alleviate social problems, improve well-being and enhance capabilities and opportunities for mobility in society. Regardless of socio-economic status, S-L provides university students the tools to become socially responsible citizens and qualified professionals.

S-L can be used as a pragmatic and results-oriented method for harvesting both academic learning and positive social change. Universities in Asia, both private (Lady Doak College from India, International Christian University from Japan, Seoul Women University from Korea, SIM university from Singapore, Fu Jen Catholic University from Taiwan) and public (National University of Singapore, University of Hong Kong, Sun-Yat-Sun University from Mainland China, etc) are beginning to embrace S-L as an integral part of their education. This movement initiated the formation of the Service-Learning Asia Network (SLAN), a platform for universities to exchange ideas and practices of how Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) can fulfill their role in providing future generations with a high quality education and

contributing to the betterment of society.

As one of the top ten Asian Liberal Arts Universities, Lingnan University is committed to whole person education and echoing its motto of "Education for Service". In order to uphold its mission, the university has implemented a variety of Chinese and Western liberal arts principles and ideals to facilitate students' learning. S-L, as the liberal arts traditions, is also one of the strategies to enhance students' learning at Lingnan. Every year, there are 700 students out of 2600 students engage academic course with S-L activities. S-L at Lingnan has shown not only to enhance the quality of students' academic learning, but, through a wide range of local and global experiences, also improve students' communication skills, research skills and civic orientation. Though there is a trend of universal HE, institutions need to think of how to attract and create better learning for students. S-L serves not only as a necessary co-curriculum for whole person education, but as a means for redressing today's imbalance caused by the massification of HE.