A New Vision for Further and Higher Education

Essay Collection

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Foreword

Faiza Shaheen

On a freezing cold morning in December 2017 I found myself giving a speech outside Goldsmiths, University of London. Lecturers were on strike over a pensions dispute, which was the latest assault on their pay and benefits. Amongst the large crowd stood disgruntled academics alongside university support staff and students who were united in their anger at the direction of travel in higher education. Looking around at the striking lecturers, underpaid staff and debt-ridden students the obvious question was who is higher education working for? Even business complains that they don't get graduates with necessary skills. Reading the excellent essays in this publication, I realise that on that day I only saw the tip of iceberg.

Higher education is of course not the only route for adults wishing to remain in education. Further education - the colleges and institutions that provide education below degree level for people above school age - get even less attention. In the era of austerity we have seen cuts ideologically applied across the country, and further education further undermined, with 16-18 education facing the sharpest cuts in the education sector. Communities that have been left behind, and in reality held back through bad policy, have seen local adult education centres shut, which has left them further isolated and unable to learn locally. All this at a time when automation means that we need more, not less adult education.

Against this backdrop of disillusionment, under investment and internal backlash we present these essays. We return to some basic questions including 'what is education primarily for?' To educate individuals to fulfil their potential? To progress society? To increase economic growth? Societal investment in education has paid untold dividends, but the consensus amongst authors in this publication is that further and higher education have lost their purpose.

The further and higher education system combined have increasingly become a vehicle for maintaining privilege and entrenching inequalities, for initiating young people in to an economic system that treats us purely as consumers, and for perpetuating precarious working conditions that result in stressed staff with no security.

Authors were asked to be bold, to think beyond the confines of today's dominant ideologies and approach and to throw off the self-imposed shackles of austerity. In these pages you will find words that have long been disassociated with education - humanity, community and co-operation. The breadth of the thought also reminds us that this isn't just what we teach, or even how we teach it, but the institutional culture in which we deliver that education. This is why alongside essays on the need to move towards community and co-operative models of education, we also have essays on how to make universities free of sexual violence, how we de-colonise and support more Black and ethnic minority ethnic academics and how we have better representation of disabled academics.

The Thatcher-Reagan experiment that begun 40 years ago has not only made our graduates the most indebted across high-income countries, but steeped our education culture with individualism over society and profit over well-being. This system cannot be sufficiently changed through tinkering, the bold and multi-faceted approach offered in this report provides a new vision and route map to recast our education system anew.

Dr Faiza Shaheen
Director - CLASS

Introduction - A Vision of a Radical Policy for Further and Higher Education

Sol Gamsu and Richard Hall discuss what a progressive plan could look like

The Labour Party's 2017 commitment to free education in universities and colleges is a huge progressive step which means that student debt will no longer burden future generations of learners financially or emotionally. This is an essential first step towards rolling back the marketisation of our system of further and higher education. Beyond this though, there is currently little detail to progressive policy on post-16 and post-18 education.

The challenges that a decade of austerity cuts have wrought upon the education system are well established. Primary and secondary schools are suffering budget cuts with per pupil funding set to fall by 8 per cent by 2020 compared to 2014, while further education continues to be underfunded and marginalised in public policy and investment decisions. As the essays in this report show, the education system as currently operated has neither a viable present nor a long-term future.

Yet the challenges that staff and students face are not simply those which stem from a lack of funding or the introduction of market measures of competition, debt, and constant 'quality' measurement. There are chronic issues of inequality that pre-date the austerity years, such as the vocational / academic divide; the huge inequalities between different institutions; a lack of representation of black and ethnic minorities in research and teaching; or the endemic sexual harassment and low pay of women across

our institutions of education. It is clear that the current state of our education system is not fit to serve the needs of the majority of the population.

There is perhaps nothing more emblematic of this than university Vice Chancellor's drawing oversized salaries while junior staff are placed on precarious contracts, and outsourced cleaning and estates staff live on poverty wages. Fortunately, the pushback from staff and students alike is already here. Last year's strike by university staff defending their pensions against cuts marked a turning point in the politics of higher education. London universities have also been gradually caving to pressure from trade unions to bring their cleaning, catering and security staff back in-house. The tide is turning, but for the next Labour government the challenge is not simply to roll-back the cuts and damage of the last 10 years; the challenge is to create something that is fundamentally new and breaks with the old in a deep and fundamental sense.

Against this backdrop, what are the policies and politics which will transform higher education whether it takes place in colleges, universities or communities?

Labour's Lifelong Learning Commission and the Workers' Educational Association's Adult 100 Commission provide the opportunity to develop the radical and transformative politics of education that is so urgently needed. We hope that this report can contribute to this project and progressive politics' wider 'institutional turn' along the lines of ownership, control, democracy and participation.

Free education is an enormous step, but our models and principles of education need to be free in a much deeper sense. Free from inequality, oppression, racism, sexism and ableism. In short, we want our education not simply to be free from cost but to be - in Paulo Freire and bell hooks' words - 'the practice of freedom.' This means universities and colleges which are democratic, run by students and staff with and for our communities, and students from abroad who enrich our learning and our future. What then are the policies that will get us there?

In this anthology of short political writing, we explore what a National Education Service could look like. The politics and policies which we describe are both practical and utopian, they aim to be achievable but deeply transformative with the knowledge that these are structural problems

transformative with the knowledge that these are structural problems which require sustained, long-term political, cultural and economic shifts, and winning a new consensus about what education is and who it is for.

Working from their book, *Who Are Universities For?*, Josie McLellan, Tom Sperlinger and Richard Pettigrew lay out radical proposals for widening participation in HE. They set a series of radical aims: 90% FE and HE participation by 2029; fully open access HE by 2025; modular HE with part-time and lifelong learning the new norm; and participatory local fora to set teaching, research and budgets. David Ridley then outlines an alternative model for democratic and local ownership for universities. Drawing on 1970s plans for workers' control at Lucas Aerospace, and the Cleveland model of local redevelopment, he shows how Labour's agenda on municipal, public ownership can be linked to university governance and the National Education Service.

Richard Hall's chapter applies the knowledge and traditions of the cooperative movement to critique and suggest transformative alternatives to the competitive model of HE. He draws on international examples of cooperative and radical experiments in HE from New York to the Basque country to think of how universities could create socially useful knowledge. Jana Bacevic then argues that Labour's commitment to transforming higher education offers the opportunity to re-shape how knowledge production works. She outlines how the current Research Excellence Framework is a waste of time and money, and exacerbates a toxic research culture which is particularly damaging for precarious early-career scholars. Bacevic makes concrete proposals for more progressive ways of distributing research funding and genuinely publicly accessible academic publishing.

Using interviews from their FE Transforms project, Vicky Duckworth and Rob Smith draw on the narratives of Further Education students to describe the vital role of Further Education in changing people's lives. They situate these interviews in the context of a marketised and inadequately funded system. And they close with proposals for greater funding; an end to restraints on course-length and pedagogy; as well as how colleges should be seen as local hubs for inclusion, cohesion and access. Bridging the gap between higher education and post-16, Sol Gamsu looks at how the focus on access to elite universities involves denying the value of most students in working-class schools. He describes the need to rethink what

we value in education, and outlines how the changes to higher education would cascade down into post-16 education in schools and colleges.

Anna Bull, Jayne Bullough and Tiffany Page write about sexual violence and abuse against students in UK universities. Drawing on academic (Bull and Page) and practitioner (Bullough) perspectives, they lay out the five principles - belief, visibility, transparency, accountability and empowerment – that should underpin how universities approach such incidents.

Jen Remnant, Kate Sang, Thomas Calvard and James Richards describe the problems disabled staff face and the inadequacy of current reporting and recording mechanisms. They argue for the need to change academia so it 'starts from assumptions of accessibility'. This means better ways for staff to disclose their disability anonymously; transparent and accessible policies on disability; and creating disability champions and greater and proper funding for disabled staff, especially within research funding.

Challenges of access and meaningful inclusion are again centre-stage in Jason Arday's chapter on decolonising the curriculum and the lack of academic representation of staff of colour. He outlines the structural, organisational, and cultural changes that are needed if higher education is to be a place where staff of colour and students from ethnic minority backgrounds are properly represented in content and structures of the university.

We also want to open up new space and ground for political writing about education. The nexus of policy-research in the education sphere is dominated by charities, networks and think-tanks that largely operate within a neo-liberal frame. If we are to take power over education, not only in a narrow political sense but in the sense of a deep, cultural and social re-alignment of what education is and can be, then we have to start fighting on and against the political terrain that we have inherited from the last four decades of neoliberal policy-making in education. We need to make space for the research and policy ideas that will allow a new politics of education to arise. We do not claim to have covered everything in this report but it is a beginning. This is the start of a long debate and a long but urgent struggle. We hope this writing provides some of the ideas and politics to re-make and make anew an education which truly belongs to the many, not the few ■

TAKING THE MARKET OUT OF EDUCATION

The Possibilities for Co-Operative Higher Education

Richard Hall writes about the transformational power of a co-operative approach

The State We're In

A decade on from the financial crisis - which should have signalled the end of the neoliberal order - we find ourselves with greater privatisation of healthcare, education and welfare. This focus on reengineering through competition has infected university education resulting in a crisis in conceptions of the idea or purpose of higher education (HE).[1] A raft of secondary policy instruments have amplified this re-engineering of the HE sector and its institutions around economic value and productivity with learning as a commodity, rather than humane values. These instruments have predicated activity upon: new public management grounded in efficiency; risk-based approaches to curriculum delivery and assessment underpinned by discourses of impact and excellence; competition between individual academics, students (and their families), subjects and institutions; and the generation of new forms of corporate governance.[2]

Beyond changes to public spending on HE, a radicalised, political economic context has been set by Her Majesty's (HM) Treasury in its focus upon productivity.[3] This has been implemented in HE through: first, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's drive to link educational outcomes and HM Revenue and Customs tax data;[4] second, work on graduate (longitudinal educational) outcomes commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE); and third, the risk-based regulatory approach of the Office for Students (OfS) enacted through the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA).[5]

A competitive infrastructure has been generated for imposing discourses of entrepreneurship, excellence, impact and value-for-money, with a focus upon the availability of marketable performance data and league tables.

The HERA argues that these processes allow more efficient allocation of resources between providers and subjects, and are the primary mechanisms for generating innovation, in terms of institutional governance and funding, labour rights and practices, and the design, delivery and assessment of the curriculum. This has amplified the historical morphing of institutions into quasi-private corporate organisations managed by vice-chancellors as CEOs.

It is important to recognise the inhuman impact of this re-engineering, which has ramifications beyond the declining participation of mature and part-time learners. First, in increased reporting by students, postgraduates and academics of ill-health, overwork and precarity; second, as with the teaching profession, in an increase in reports of people leaving the profession, or refusing to become a member of a precariously employed, surplus population; third, through an increase in the closure of departments with courses deemed unproductive; fourth, and ongoing failure to meet the needs of care-givers and carers in education; and fifth, the inability of institutions to support the needs of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic students unless they meet dominant norms of practice and performance.[6]

Radical, neoliberal reforms push a more atomised, agenda for teaching and learning based upon competition between individual academics and students. Focusing upon competition appears to foreclose upon possible alternative models of HE. However, this is an inhuman appearance that struggles to contain the possibilities encapsulated in co-operative and collective intellectual practices that can generate more authentic, humane understanding.

A co-operative educational movement

Inside-and-against this neoliberal context, a range of alternative, educational expressions have emerged, rooted in those more humane values of association, dialogue and solidarity, many of which have a deep explicit or implicit connection to the values and principles of the co-operative movement. These ideals have a deep historical and material culture realised in community, co-operation, education, autonomy, participation, democratic control and open membership (International Co-operative Association.[7]

The creation of co-operative HE offers a possibility for the democratic production of knowledge as a means for generating new principles for living and livelihood, enabled through values of courage, faith, justice, hope and solidarity. These values reject the inhumanity of the law of value and profit as the structuring reality of society.

Through the development of self-mediation and democracy-through-education, actually-existing examples of co-operative HE offer an alternative vision of society inside which the educational space acts as a moment of possibility.[8] Such examples or experiments include: the transnational Free Libra Open Knowledge Society; the Free University of New York; the International Co-operative University; the Lucas Plan for socially-useful knowledge in the UK (see David Ridley in this report); Mondragon University; the National Council of Labour Colleges in the UK; Reggio Emillia in Italy; the Social Science Centre in Lincoln, UK; and Leicester Vaughan College. These examples show us that co-operative university are not only possibly but far superior than the current neoliberal model.[9]

Educational co-operatives and transformational possibility

Educational co-operatives offer a potential means of incubating, testing and reshaping values and principles at the level of society. This is especially the case where those co-operatives integrate their governance, regulation, approaches to funding, curricula, and knowledge production with alternative conceptions of mutuality, solidarity and co-operation, such as those emerging from indigenous or marginalised communities. Indigenous methodologies, or modes of being, help to develop a fresh focus on knowledge and to reframe the idea of movement towards a more humane ways of producing society, engaging the body, emotions and cognition.[10] Here, knowledge is rooted in people, place, philosophy, values, communities, cosmologies, and as a result it generates ‘relational accountability’.[11] A discussion about what we collectively value is crucial here.

Co-operation exists as a pedagogical technique for reimagining society beyond ideas of ‘public ownership’ and instead focus upon ‘common ownership’. This generates new conceptions of knowledge production, useful knowledge, social scholarship, and social governance, through the direct association of socialised producers, using technologies that lie beyond private property. As a result, these technologies and the

knowledges that they both catalyse and combine with, act as moments for reimagining property as a commons, or as a new social form that cannot be alienated. This demands that the production of knowledge is managed as a commons, democratically-controlled in association, enabled in an ecology or social economy of co-operatives.

Co-operative HE and mass intellectuality

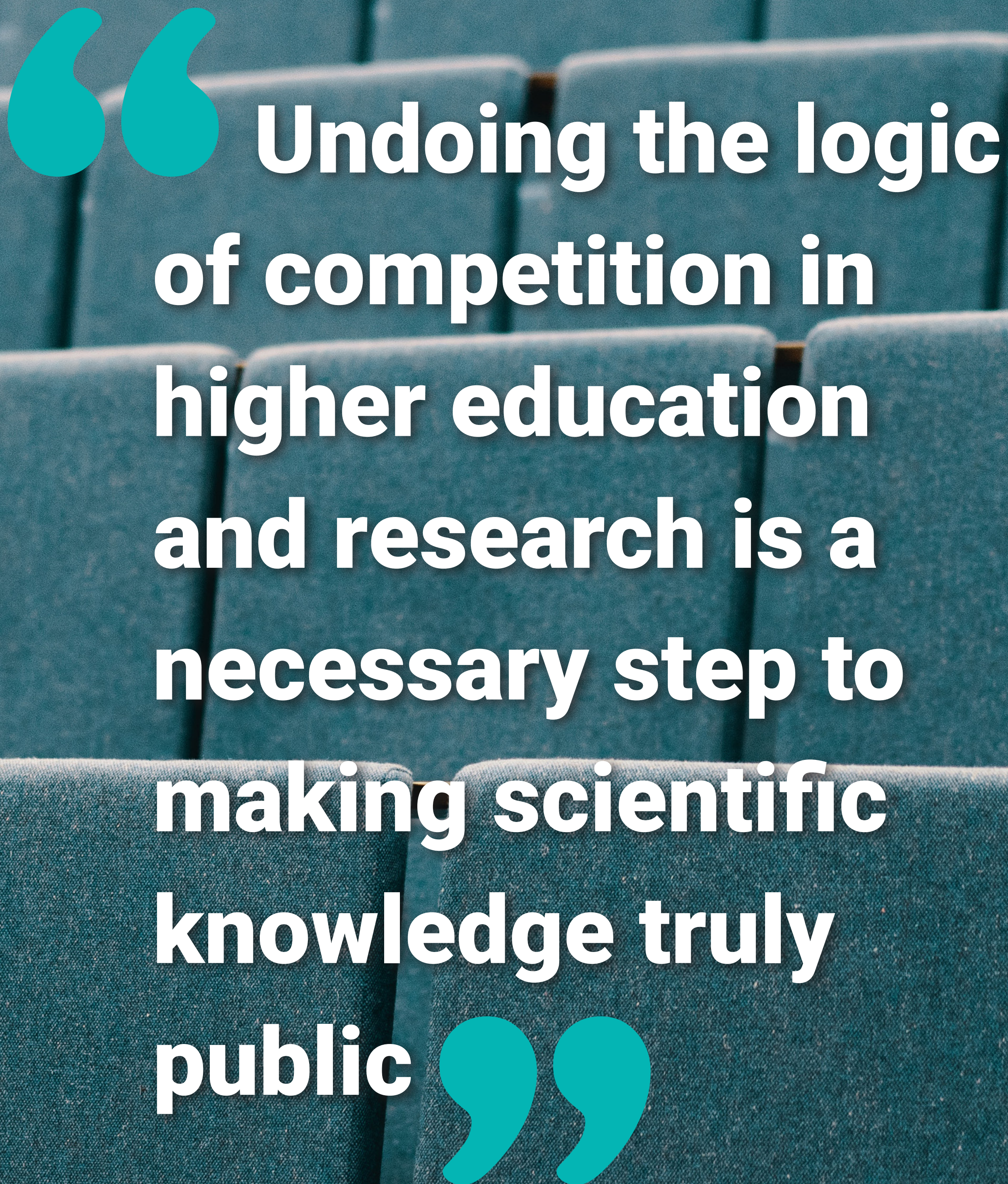
One of the possibilities that emerges from a more humanistic analysis, rooted in the idea of a renewed co-operative, educational project, is that people might be able to use co-operative skills, capacities, knowledge and technologies re-purpose the general intellect as mass intellectuality. This is the production of socially-useful knowledge as freely available, and as a form of commons. How can we liberate knowledge for alternate social purposes? This questions human richness in terms of the accumulation of commodities, and instead redefines that richness, or a rich life, as one that is free to work with and to contribute to general, social knowledge, skills and capabilities, which are governed and distributed co-operatively.

This shift means moving both culturally and materially toward a co-operative analysis of what is socially-useful beyond the market. This demands dialogue across society about: knowledge, skills and capacities as communal rather than private property; recasting technologies for social use,[12] and socially-useful pedagogic practice and production.[13] This dialogue must be underpinned by a commitment to co-operative principles and values. Reimagining co-operative HE would then seek to enrich how we: study co-operation explicitly across disciplines, in order to dissolve separation; embed co-operative learning as a practice of care and love; and practice co-operation as a movement of praxis in open institutions, designed to connect them at the level of society. As a moment of social, pedagogic production, this grounds democracy in-and-through the curriculum, with a focus upon interdisciplinarity that resists alienated-labour, and points towards less harmful conditions of production. It crystallises creative, co-operative intelligence as 'a regenerative cultural force revealed as a form of associative intelligence.[14]

The creation of a distributed, autonomous federation of co-operatives offers a moment for reimagining knowledge production as mass intellectuality. A HE system that includes nodes of the co-operative project around the world would enable all intellectual workers, not simply

not simply academics, the possibility to resist the assault on their labour rights, precarious employment, ill-health and overwork, by generating radical democracy in relation to social production.[15] This must be materialised as more than a university organised co-operatively for more equitable consumption; it must be a university whose idea and reality is co-operative, social production and reproduction. It enables what Marx highlighted as self-government for the producers, predicated upon human liberation away from alienated labour.

If co-operative production is not to remain a sham and a snare; if it is to supersede the capitalist system; if united co-operative societies are to regulate national production upon common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodic convulsions which are the fatality of capitalist production – what else, gentlemen, would it be but communism, "possible" communism?[16] ■


“Undoing the logic of competition in higher education and research is a necessary step to making scientific knowledge truly public”

Co-inquiry, democratisation and public ownership: Anchoring our universities back in the community

David Ridley provides an alternative vision of civic universities

In February, the University Partnerships Programme (UPP) Civic University Commission published its final report.[1] That this report was truly disappointing should perhaps not come as much of a surprise, as the list of commissioners was made up of current or ex-vice-chancellors and chairs of governing boards, the chief executive of the university vice-chancellors' 'mission group' Universities UK, and the head of business for the Centre for Policy Studies, a right-wing think tank set up in 1974 by Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph. In its disappointing conclusions, the report highlights the urgent need for the Left to develop its own policy agenda for higher education (HE), which in turn underlines the timeliness of the papers in this anthology.

While the report is right in pointing out that now is 'not a good time' for universities to be facing questions from the public about how far local communities have benefitted from the marketisation of UK higher education (HE), it absolutely fails to address the underlying causes of the deep alienation of these communities from local, or 'civic' institutions. By contrast, its recommendations are limited to the creation of yet another badge of honour that entrepreneurial universities can plaster on the sides of their buildings – 'The Civic University Agreement' – and more pots of cash to be channelled away from these communities into further expansion.

This chapter sketches out a concrete response to the problem of how universities should relate to their local communities, suggesting that change must come from the 'bottom up' and through a radical reconstruction of the relationship between the academic profession and the wider public it is meant to serve. Due to the constraints of space, this will be a sketch. However, my other work which this chapter draws on – which is, of course, inspired by the work of others – is indicated at relevant points in the footnotes.

Co-Inquiry

Academics in Britain and elsewhere are today under attack from neoliberal market reformers who try to position themselves as liberators of HE and defenders of student welfare.[2] While academics rightly point out that marketisation will destroy education quality and hollow out the wider cultural and social benefits of HE, their protests are easily painted as defences of 'producer power' and as conservatism in the face of liberal-capitalist democratisation. To escape this ideological trap, academics must, along with others invested in public higher education, formulate a radical, democratic and above all *modernising* alternative to both the traditional-elitist and market models currently on offer.

At the core of this modernising alternative must be a reconstruction of the academic profession, specifically a reconstruction of notions of academic freedom, collegial self-governance and the public good of higher education.[3] Rather than turn to clichés of the academy and public university based on ancient or medieval ideal types, I have in my own work drawn on the work of American philosopher of democratic education, John Dewey.

As the first president of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), Dewey along with his colleagues wrote an influential defence of academic freedom that was designed to protect academics from attack by aggressive administrators and interventionist business donors. What distinguishes the AAUP's '1915 Declaration of Principles' from more conservative defences of academic freedom is the direct link it draws between the academic profession and its *responsibility* to the public.[4] Rather than merely stating that universities are public institutions and have a public value that must be funded through general taxation, the AAUP declared that academics were directly employed by the public as scientific experts whose 'peculiar and necessary service' was to supply socially useful knowledge that could be applied by the public to the intelligent direction of society.

Dewey's own work went even further in reconstructing the concept of public responsibility at the heart of the academic profession, arguing on the basis of his pragmatist philosophy that academics should be co-inquirers alongside and within the public as part of a wider movement of social democratisation.[5] While he believed that academics needed to learn to communicate better the results of scientific inquiry, inquiry was itself for Dewey improved through the involvement of the public in the production of knowledge, not just its consumption.

Democratisation

Many campaigns against marketisation begin with academic concerns, such as declining pay, performance management, pensions, and so on. While these are worthy causes, they are often assumed to be of public interest, with academics sometimes surprised when the public fails to come out strongly in support of such campaigns. What activists should be doing is building campaigns out of the gripes and needs of local publics impacted by anti-social, corporatised 'civic' universities and channelling these gripes and needs into broad-based local and regional campaigns for democratisation.[6]

Almost half a century ago, a group of workers representing a cross section of the Lucas Aerospace workforce formed a 'combine' and challenged management's right to control and direct the means of production by proposing an alternative corporate plan.[7] Part of a wider movement for workers control in the 1970s, shop stewards at different Lucas Aerospace factories and from different sections of the workforce – both 'skilled' and 'unskilled' – came together to get ahead of the rationalisation that was threatening to destroy British heavy industry at the time and looked at how this industry could be repurposed to meet the growing need for 'socially useful' products, and therefore put apparently 'redundant' jobs and unused productive capacity at the service of society.

University and College Union branches, alongside other HE-based trade unions, can use the Lucas Plan as a model of how to build broad based campaigns for democratisation through co-inquiry. Working with trade unions and community organisations in local areas, branches can gather wide responses to questionnaires asking ordinary people what they think about their local university, and what exactly they need that can be provided for by such an institution. Alongside these questionnaires, branches can hold public meetings where citizens can air their concerns, and discussion

can raise awareness of the origins of these concerns in marketisation, neoliberal privatisation and austerity.

What both Dewey and the Lucas Plan point to is an alternative to both neoliberal marketisation and Fabian ideas of top-down state planning.[8] Through co-inquiry, democratic publics can develop what Dewey called socialised, or collective intelligence. This collective intelligence in turn provides both the knowledge and the democratic-organisational basis for political democratisation.

Public ownership

Democratised universities have an essential role to play in this 'prefigurative' vision of decentralised, intelligent planning.[9] While campaigns for democratisation must formulate demands out of local needs and concerns, there must also be some idea of what kind of institution might be able to serve these needs and deepen local democracy rather than serving the needs of neoliberal capitalism. One promising idea currently being explored is of a democratically owned and controlled 'co-operative university'.[10]

There is not enough room in this chapter to explore fully the model of a co-operative university.[11] I want to instead concentrate on how such democratised universities can play a part in spreading co-operative solutions within local communities, building decentralised processes of social planning into an alternative and achievable vision of sustainable, equitable socio-economic growth.

Co-operative or democratic universities (the two terms will be treated as synonymous from here on out) could help local community groups set up their own co-operatives through sharing expertise, as well as offering financial help. These universities could also adopt procurement policies which require suppliers, if possible, to also be co-operatives. If this isn't possible, then these universities could pro-actively help set up such co-operatives with interested parties. In this way, democratised universities and local practices of 'democratic collegiality' could become the basis for bottom-up processes of economic regeneration.

While civic universities and former polytechnics have helped redevelop local and regional economies affected by deindustrialisation, the benefits have tended to be distributed unequally. Alongside unequal regeneration, or 'gentrification', a discourse around universities as 'anchor institutions' has

emerged. However, in most cases this concept acts as a rationalisation for universities to access even more public funding in the form of 're-skilling' budgets, mostly directed at niche, high-tech industries, or entrepreneurialism, where universities support local start-ups in exchange for shares in spin-out companies.

Democratic universities, on the other hand, by sourcing their services from the local co-operatives while extending their extensive resources to the wider community as part of a wider, co-ordinated approach, could in become anchor institutions for genuine, democratic regeneration and positive social change. This is exactly the thinking behind the influential 'Cleveland Model', an innovative approach to economic development, green job creation, and neighbourhood stabilisation based in in the US city of Cleveland.[12]

Cleveland, like many post-industrial cities in the UK, is characterised by a concentration of anchor institutions, including universities and hospitals, and is directly adjacent to six communities with a median household income of $18,500 and where 25-30 per cent of residents live in poverty. Although these institutions currently spend about $3 billion dollars on goods and services combined, historically very little of it has stayed in the area.

However, a project by the Cleveland Foundation has sought a new approach in collaboration with these anchor institutions that aims not only to create jobs and generate new business, but also keep wealth and assets within the community long-term. Co-operatively owned and controlled local businesses like the Evergreen Cooperative Laundry, urban farm Green City Growers and the solar panel and LED supplier Evergreen Energy Solutions now provide these anchor intuitions with crucial services, employing local people often from disadvantaged backgrounds, keeping the money flowing around the local community. As Cleveland Foundation's CEO Ronn Richard insists, this isn't just some small-scale example of middle class 'localism', but 'equitable wealth creation at scale'.

Municipal ownership is also one of Labour's 'Alternative Models of Ownership', identified by a pamphlet of the same name launched just before the 2017 election.[13] In the pamphlet, Labour points to a similar initiative that has been developing in the northern town of Preston. After the John Lewis Partnership pulled out of a £700 million regeneration initiative for Preston city centre in 2011, Preston City Council and the Centre for Local Economic

the University of Central Lancashire, Preston's College, Cardinal Newman College, Lancashire Constabulary and Community Gateway – to identify £3 million of potentially 'influenceable' procurement budgets that could be redirected to local businesses.

Because of this intervention, these anchor institutions have now begun to revisit their commissioning and procurement strategies and have broken contracts into lots to enable smaller organisations to bid for them, while the Community Wealth Building initiative has worked to build up the capacity of these small businesses and raise their awareness of potential opportunities. 'The impact of this work will be more measurable in the longer term,' Labour points out, 'but changes that are bringing benefits for the local economy in the form of jobs and business development are visible.'

Preston has already improved its status in the 'Index of Multiple Deprivation', according to Labour, with better paid jobs and wealth being distributed within its communities. Rather than retreating from their role in local and regional economies as some universities have done since 2010,[14] universities should be playing a central role in the creation and co-ordination of such models across the UK.

Conclusion

The ideas sketched out above provide the basis for an alternative vision of not just civic universities, but of HE as a socially useful system. A systematic approach is needed today more than ever, as people begin to realise that, no matter how much tweaking, a market in HE is neither workable nor desirable.

Labour's proposal of a 'cradle to grave' National Education Service (NES) is an attempt to approach education systematically, offering an exciting, modernising and potentially democratising alternative to neoliberal ideas of education as human capital.[15] However, the NES policy, particularly with regards to HE, remains under-developed and must yet answer difficult questions about how progressive free HE can really be within a deeply class-divided society. Another good question is what exactly Labour would do to replace the trilogy of national level performance management in HE: the Research Excellence, Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes, and Knowledge Exchange Frameworks (REF, TEF and KEF).[16]

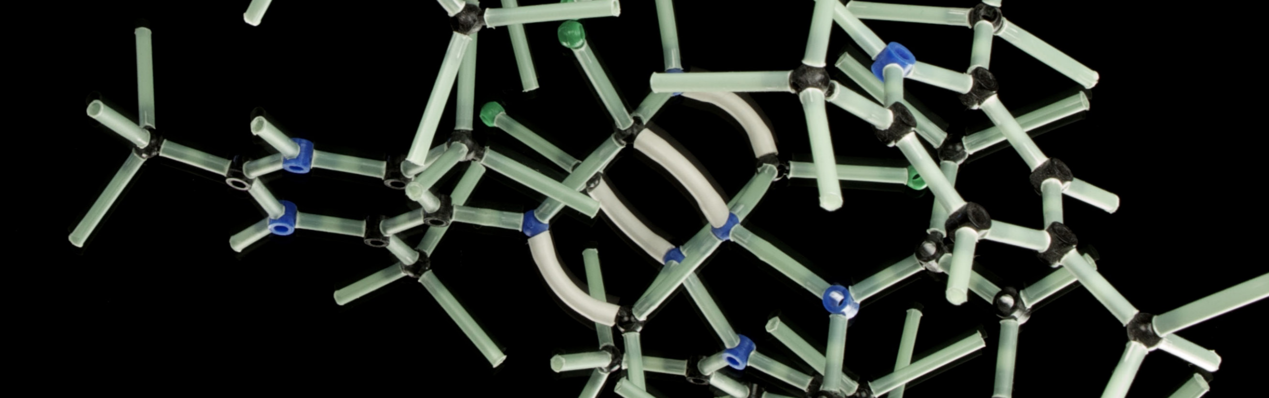
While I have in my own work tried to answer offer some answers to these questions,[17] the University and College Union (UCU) has also made some useful contributions.[18] The suggestion that free HE should be financed by an increase in corporation tax is a good one. UCU's point that HE funding under a Labour government should also come with caveats, like union representation on university governing boards and a move away from using precarious 'zero hours' contracts where secure employment is more than possible, is also useful.

Democratic economic regeneration can also be linked to other exciting ideas emerging from the left, for example the Green New Deal (GND), which argues for an economic mobilisation on a scale 'not seen since World War II and the New Deal' to address the twin problems of climate change and widespread socio-economic inequality.[19] Like the Cleveland and Preston models of economic regeneration, the GND is based on principles of co-operative and municipal ownership and control.

Now is the time for radical proposals, not for tinkering. The vision of HE presented above, of democratic universities acting as co-operative anchor institutions and hubs of collective intelligence, offers an ambitious but necessary way to achieve something like the GND.

But ambition is what is needed right now. After all, the struggle against marketisation is now also necessarily part of a struggle for the future ■

“The struggle against marketisation in education is part of the struggle for the future”



Out with the Sorting Hat: Reversing the Logic of Competition in Research

Jana Bacevic discusses knowledge as a public good

Labour Party's commitment to the transformation of higher education and research has, for the first time in many years, created a genuine opening for a new politics of knowledge that would work towards making UK research part of the global effort to create sustainable, liveable societies. This kind of vision requires a fundamentally different approach to knowledge production, driven not by competition and profit, but by cooperation and the desire to make our societies places of peaceful, sustainable, long-term prosperity.

National Education Service and the commitment to public funding of higher education represent important and welcome steps in this direction, but one that needs to be complemented by corresponding policies in the domain of research. Consecutive national governments have lauded UK's prominence in the global research and knowledge production landscape. Since the 1980s, however, policies in this domain were overwhelmingly underpinned by the assumption competition is the only way to maintain this level of global excellence. This has created a fragmented sector where researchers, teams, and institutions struggle to fulfil or exceed professional standards, often engaging in what many openly describe as 'box-ticking exercises' in order to fit research assessment criteria. The linking of these criteria to career progression in universities has contributed to job insecurity and created a lack of trust in and between institutions, as well as between disciplines and occupational categories. This, in turn, has exacerbated inequalities related to age, gender, ability, ethnicity, and class.

A sector plagued by these issues has neither a viable present nor a sustainable long-term

future. Unfortunately, many of these problems – including exploitation, reproduction of social inequalities, and disciplinary 'siloing' – predate the constitution of higher education and research as distinct public sectors. In many cases, roots of these problems lie beyond the domain of governmental intervention, which means that any attempt to change them will have to proceed slowly and is likely to encounter obstacles.

In this context, cooperation between academics, students, and the public sector is key. A future progressive government will have the opportunity to rewrite – that is, write jointly – the 'social contract' between universities and society. This 'social contract', frequently invoked in principle but rarely discussed in practice, should be based on principles of equality, justice, democracy and sustainability (See Hall on how these principles have been developed in cooperative organisations). This chapter gives an overview on how to approach its elements that most directly concern research and scientific knowledge production. Given limited space, the chapter does not engage with specific disciplinary needs, nor the difference between STEM subjects, social sciences and humanities. It also focuses primarily on research done within public institutions of further (FE) and higher education (HE), rather than private/independent institutes, industry, or think tanks.

Research funding

Since the 1980s, the allocation of research funding has gradually shifted away from lump-sum mechanisms, in which block grants were allocated to institutions, towards a mix of performance-based funding allocation and individual / team grants, mostly distributed by the research councils.[1] At present, major instruments for allocating research funding are the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which Higher Education Funding Councils of England and devolved nations use as an indicator of research quality, and different programmes overseen by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), further managed by specific research councils. A growing percentage of research in universities is privately funded – either through investment from business (including university-industry partnerships), or through the non-profit sector (charities).

Performance-based research funding, from the early days of Research Assessment Exercise to the REF, has been under sustained criticism from the academic sector. Whereas targeted, competitively-allocated grants (in the form of scholarships) have always been part of the funding landscape,

using them as the primary instrument for the governance of research is deeply problematic.

- Regular research assessment introduces a competitive climate aimed at maximising output, at a high cost to the quality of research, as well as employment security and the well-being of academics:

Independent reviews have found that performance-based funding induces 'gamification' and 'trading', with particularly negative consequences for early career researchers. The drive to 'publish or perish' leads to the overproduction and lowering of standards, with the imperative to get published taking precedence over quality of publications, and competition taking precedence over research cooperation.

- Research assessment is costly and time-consuming, generating few useful results:

Some academics have estimated the total cost of the REF to exceed £1billion. Regardless of the accuracy of this estimate, the time, energy, and affect involved in research assessment – from assembling panels to submitting inputs – is a major toll on the sector, with no tangible benefit. The independent reviews pointed out that the 'metric' tends to disproportionately penalise precarious and early career researchers, as well as compound inequalities related to age, gender, ethnicity and disability. Proposals to adjust forms of measurement in ways that could accommodate these differences do not address any of the key issues, reproducing instead the 'sorting hat' logic of research assessment at high cost to the taxpayer, and with detrimental consequences for academics.

Alternative forms of allocating funding:

- Block-grants distributed to institutions, to establish own research priorities and strategies:

Higher education funding councils already allocate such funds. Instead of a performance-based metric, grants could be allocated on the basis of institutional size, calculated as number of full-time research active[2] staff. Obviously, there would need to be quality assurance to prevent the kind of 'gaming' created by the REF (e.g. hiring practices meant to increase research income); however, this could be done in view of shifting control to individual researchers, thus strengthening the independence of research and dignity of academic profession.

- Directly allocated research stipends to all staff.

Allocating stipends (something akin to 'Research Basic Income') to all staff who do research would help ensure the sustainability and quality of research outputs. This could be a flat-rate stipend or a percentage of salary (adapted to ensure ECRs, and staff at smaller and less wealthy institutions, are not disadvantaged). This would help dissolve the unproductive hierarchy between teaching and research, and also reverse the trend of allocating high teaching loads to junior or contingent faculty, which reproduces status and other forms of inequality in the academia.

- Specific (strategic) grants for priority areas and topics:

UK research councils already distribute similar grants. In addition to the existing programmes, specific research initiatives could be developed in conversation with academics, community groups, and organisations. The process of decision-making could be made more transparent through an open peer-review process involving different members of the community.

- Support to peer review boards within disciplines and learned societies, ensuring the maintenance of high ethical and methodological standards:

No social domain is immune to abuses of power. One way to work towards the maintenance of ethical standards in research is to direct state funding towards strengthening academic peer review, and developing (or strengthening, where existing) ethical review boards within disciplines or domains of research. This would entail making peer review open to public scrutiny, and regularly monitoring publication, hiring, and promotion trends. This policy shift would also help involve the public in the process of deliberation concerning the goals, objectives, and strategic directions of research.

Academic publishing

The problem of performance-based research funding, and the problem of scientific publishing, are mutually reinforcing.[4] 'Predatory' journals have become ubiquitous. At the same time, some publishers continue to charge extortionate fees for accessing scientific publications. This problem is inherent in the 'business' model: if academic publishing is a profitable enterprise, publishers are likely to minimise expenditure on labour in order

to maximise profit. In practice, this means that academics usually work for free.

- As long as research funding policies reward output, there is going to be a 'race' to publish as much as possible, as fast as possible, at the lowest cost to the publisher:

Consequences of the 'publish or perish' culture range from increased pressure on academics and students leading to an 'epidemic' of mental health issues, solidification of toxic working cultures and exploitative work patterns, to overall decline in the quality of produced research, reflected, among other things, in the reproducibility crisis.

- Open access (OA) policies and initiatives such as 'Plan S' are not sufficient to undo this logic:

In their current form, OA policies either shift the cost to the taxpayer, raising issues of social justice and distribution, or to universities, who often make up for the shortfall by charging higher tuition fees or further outsourcing labour, compounding problems of casualisation and precarity. Undoing the logic of competition in higher education and research is a necessary step of making scientific knowledge truly public.

The Labour Party recognises the value of knowledge as a public good. However, ways in which the public can benefit from that knowledge are not always predictable. Maintaining a diversity of publishing landscape through public funding for high-quality, peer reviewed academic publications (journals and books), combined with grants and subsidies to smaller, independent publishers, including academic publishing cooperatives, could represent a first step in dismantling the principles of market competition. In the domain of research, this means public support should be conditional on the adoption of sustainable production, distribution, and disposal policies by all actors involved, from universities to publishing houses, and from learned societies to individual academics.

Concrete steps towards sustainable academic publishing practices:

- Mandating open access for publicly-funded research, including a centralised repository open to the public:

Research should be publicly accessible. However, current policies for making research available to the public are often a pure formality. Institutional repositories tend to limit access to members of the institution in question, which is far from the original purpose of open access. A centralised repository of scientific knowledge would be a useful step in dismantling the tendency towards 'siloing' of academic research.

- Providing funding and infrastructural support to high-quality, peer-reviewed journals and presses, ensuring the maintenance of academic standards; at the same time, providing public grants for small publishers and academic cooperatives, maintaining diversity in the sector:

Business models of publishing often compound the pressure to produce more, at a lower cost, stimulating competitive and exploitative practices in the academia, from plagiarism to unpaid labour of reviewing and editing. The primary space for governmental intervention could be in maintaining the diversity of the sector, in order to support high standards and values of academic inquiry, while ensuring alternative, interdisciplinary, or avant-garde voices do not get silenced. In a second step, the government could take a more active role in promoting co-operative models of publishing through e.g. incentives/tax breaks for not-for-profit presses.

- Strategic commitment to and investment in environmentally sustainable forms of scientific knowledge:

The awareness of climate change as an urgent social issue has to extend to practices of scientific knowledge production. A future progressive government must make public support to the production and presentation of scientific knowledge (including research and conference travel) conditional on the adoption of clear and transparent policies minimising their environmental impact. In the first instance, this could take the form of limiting access to public funding to institutions that use funds originating in fossil fuel extraction to fund scientific research ■

EDUCATION FOR ALL

Is university for everyone?

Josie McLellan, Richard Pettigrew and Tom Sperlinger set out an inclusive and lifelong legitlative programme

Summary

The current model of higher education is not for everyone. This, however, is a problem of design and not a rule of nature. Dismantling the exclusionary and hierarchical nature of our institutions of education is no mean feat, but more a universal and socially useful system is achievable. Radically widening participation, expanding open courses, institutionalising part-time and lifelong learning and democratising research agendas should all be front and centre of a re-imagined system of higher education.

Introduction

It is common, in debates about access to higher education, to hear the retort that 'university isn't for everyone'. It is true that the current form of HE in the UK does not work for many people, including for many of those inside the system. But maybe this is a sign that something is wrong with the system rather than with those it excludes. We think that it is possible to create a new structure for post-18 education, encompassing further and higher education that would offer lifelong opportunities for the whole population to study at a time and in a format to suit them.

The need for a system that offers opportunity to everybody has never been more urgent. The gap between high- and low-skilled employment looks set to grow exponentially over the next decade because of new technologies. It is also vital for democratic reasons. Many societal debates (in the UK, USA and elsewhere) currently divide not along lines of class or age, but between those with and without a university education. Universities, where much cutting-edge research also happens, have a vital role to play as spaces where differential levels of expertise and experience can meet on equal terms.

So how should a Labour government legislate to create a lifelong and inclusive system?

A Radical Widening of Participation

The backbone of our proposals is a radical widening of participation in third level education. We think this should be framed around a big 'moonshot' target of 90% participation that would focus the whole sector on radical transformation over a ten-year period. In order to serve the entire population, universities and colleges need to include people of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, and classes.

Against this backdrop, what are the policies and politics which will transform higher education whether it takes place in colleges, universities or communities?

Despite the expansion of higher education since the 1980s, participation in HE continues to be segregated along lines of class, geography, and ethnicity. There are particularly acute differences between different types of institutions, with disadvantaged groups disproportionately represented at non-elite, regional, and post-1992 universities. As Vikki Boliver has shown, working-class and state-school students are much less likely to apply to the elite Russell Group of 24 universities, and those Black and Asian students who do apply to the Russell Group are much less likely to receive an offer than white and privately-educated applicants with the same qualifications.[1]

In the UK, retention rates are lower for all ethnic groups (except students of Chinese and Indian ethnicity) compared with their White peers, and degree outcomes are dramatically different for Black students regardless of entry requirements for their degrees and of the qualifications they had gained beforehand. There has been a 61 per cent drop in the number of part-time students in England since 2010, with women from less privileged backgrounds among those most affected.[2] These patterns of participation have implications not only for the individuals and communities concerned, but also for the kinds of knowledge and experience that universities miss out on or mishear.

A new admissions system could meet the needs of those already in work to retrain and acquire new skills. A report by the World Economic Forum

in 2017 notes that: 'approximately 35 per cent of the skills demanded for jobs across industries will change by 2020'.[3] The pace of change is likely to accelerate and to exacerbate existing inequalities between those with high-skilled and high-paid jobs and those in low-skilled professions. In other words, unless more people have access to further and higher education, they will be left further behind economically.

What is more, those workers who have already exhausted their entitlement to three years of full-time study need opportunities to retrain as and when their current skills are outpaced by technological change. In this context of rapid technological and economic change, it makes much more sense to make further and higher education accessible repeatedly across the life course, rather than concentrating all of an individual's higher education into a brief period at the beginning of their lives.

Policy Proposal: Aim for participation in further and higher education by 90 per cent of the adult population by the year 2029.

Genuine Open Access

Transitioning to a system where all courses are open access matches the radicalism of free higher education with free access to higher education.

Current university admissions arrangements use achievement at A-Level or equivalent as the measure of a student's ability to achieve at university. Instead, we propose that all university courses should be open to anybody who wishes to enrol on them.

This policy makes equity a central pillar of the pedagogy and practice of institutions, a starting point rather than an afterthought. It goes beyond the current regulatory framework for 'access', which continues to imply some policing of the borders of the university. It provides a straightforward route into higher education for those who have no formal qualifications.

It may sound utopian to change the basis of the admissions system. But until 1945, entry to university only required six passes at GCE level[4] while, since 1969, the OU and the French université system have shown that a 'comprehensive'-style higher education system is feasible, one which is open to all, regardless of previous attainment in education.

More recently, Foundation Years in universities around the UK have provided a route into higher education for those without prior qualifications. The foundations for the alternative system we propose already partly exist within the current model, both as living experiments with alternative models (see Hall) and in FE Colleges (see Duckworth and Smith). We can build on these whilst transforming the more unequal/unjust elements of the present system.

Policy Proposal: All further and higher education institutions to offer open access to all programmes of study by 2025.

Part Time and Lifelong Learning

This policy would effect a redistribution of higher education across the whole adult population, making it easy and realistic for people to access university education at all times throughout their lives.

Currently, nearly all undergraduate qualifications in higher education are degrees; those degrees are taught mostly during working hours on weekdays; and full time study is the norm. These three features create obstacles for part-time and mature students, but they also place intense pressure on younger full-time students to make the right choice first time around - there are no second chances in our current HE system.

By making part-time and lifelong learning the norm, this policy would make it easier for people to study alongside paid work, allowing them to build up experience and skills. For some, this may also mitigate the need for maintenance loans, allowing them to study without accumulating debt. People could study at the same time as caring for children or other relatives, or drop their work hours in order to retrain and reskill.

By making the one-term module the primary unit of study rather than the three- or four-year degree, this policy would also allow people to engage in and benefit from higher education without the commitment to a long course of study. This would allow students to access the education that is most suitable for them at different times in their lives - at one time to satisfy their curiosity about a topic, at another time to train for a career, at another time to retrain for a change.

Finally, this policy will also effect a redistribution of resources regionally and between institutions, as the current barriers and inequalities between FE and HE are broken down. This will enable the existing talent and expertise in the FE sector to flourish.

Policy Proposal: Require all further and higher education institutions to offer all study on a modular basis, allowing part-time and life-long learning to become the norm.

Participatory Decision-Making

If we are serious about higher education becoming inclusive, this means changing not just who 'receives' research (as a public 'beneficiary') or teaching (as a student), but also who creates the questions and ideas that inform all university activities. We propose that new ideas should emerge through participatory fora, held each year, in which ideas are generated in local meetings and debated in regional ones. These might begin with a simple and open question: 'What are the most important, urgent, useful, or interesting questions we should ask in universities this year?'

This would allow urgent ideas, needs, dilemmas and solutions to emerge from 'outside' the academy, and would dissolve some of the borderlines between the academy and the outside world. A more diverse and representative student body will also be more confident about bringing 'real world' problems to the attention of academics, ensuring student participation in setting research agendas.

This higher education system would still identify national (and global) priorities and challenges, but the major questions would emerge not only from 'above' but also from 'below'.

Currently debates about who sets the priorities in universities oscillate between a model that emphasises the expert academic as the producer of research priorities and teaching strategy and one that emphasises some degree of external regulation and control, through mechanisms such as the Research and Teaching Excellence Frameworks (REF and TEF).

These approaches are both hierarchical; they are in different ways 'top down'. They just involve a dispute between whether the 'top' is the academic expert, the politician or the civil servant. Even apparently egalitarian initiatives such as the creation of the Office for Students (OfS) have in

reality minimised student involvement: for example the National Union of Students campaigned, when the OfS was created, about the fact that it did not have any student representation on its board.

One of our colleagues has described how, before entering higher education as a mature student, she worked for a charity in Bristol that supported teenage parents. She recalls that, on an almost daily basis, the charity and the individuals it supported had urgent questions, policy ideas, and knowledge of emerging trends in their communities. They also needed access to information, knowledge and expertise that is readily available in universities. But it did not occur to them that the university (which was just a mile or two away) would be a place they could go.

We have heard similar stories from a young entrepreneur and a senior partner in a law firm. The system we propose would allow a much freer interchange of ideas between experts within academia, those regulating the system and those with expertise to bring from other sectors or from their day-to-day lives.

Recommendations and Conclusions

These are big changes to the way that we currently run universities. But there are steps that could be taken immediately to make the transition over a ten-year period.

For example, many universities already make adjusted or 'contextual' offers to students from lower-performing state schools. They are often justified by pointing to empirical evidence that students with the same A-level results are more likely to achieve a first-class degree if they attended a state school than if they attended an independent school. On that basis, state school students deemed likely to benefit receive a lower 'contextual' offer. There is potential to take this policy much further, however, by casting the average schools as the norm, and acknowledging the independent school students as having had an advantage over the norm. A 'contextual' offer would thus become a higher offer for those who have received a privileged start in how they achieved their results.

Debates around free higher education often centre around whether such a policy would have regressive effects. These proposals cut through these debates, creating higher education institutions that are for everybody, in the same way that schools and hospitals are. To make them so would be

a bold and radical undertaking. But it would result in institutions that are more democratic, more inclusive, and more useful to society as a whole ■

Immediate	• **All institutions to introduce a system of contextual offers which take average state school A-level performance as the norm.** • **Office for Students to create a taskforce to facilitate the availability, use and understanding of transferable credit between institutions.** • **All institutions to offer 15% of their places for degree-level study to those without prior qualifications. Admission via a range of routes, including interview, foundation year or taster course.**
Within 5 Years	• **Establishment of regional forums** • **50 per cent of admissions via open access route** • **50 per cent of provision in flexible mode, such as part-time, evening, weekend, and online provision, and available as standalone modules.**
Within 10 Years	• **All programmes of study available in flexible mode and as standalone modules.** • **All admissions via open access route.**

By casting average schools as the norm, and acknowledging independent schools as having an advantage, we can design out unfairness

Why reforming HE matters for schools

Sol Gamsu discusses post-16 education and the need for deeper and radical comprehensive reform

What would the radical transformation of higher and further education mean for schools? The ideas and reforms that we outline here for universities and colleges are structural and transformational. How would this filter down and how would education change at the post-16 phase? Before outlining some of the implications for schools, I first examine the historical context of the link between secondary schools and universities.

The context: why do we only celebrate the 'successful' minority in post-16?

Sending students to the Russell Group, Oxbridge and to medicine and dentistry degrees is seen as a badge of success for post-16 providers. It is not the only marker of achievement, but it is the one you see most frequently on school websites when describing their post-16 offer. Boasting of success in university entry serves as an indicator to aspirational and middle-class parents that this is a school where the elite educational pathways are a possibility. Only in a small number of elite state schools do a majority of their students win these more coveted university places.[1] These elite state schools are mostly grammar schools, comprehensives in suburban or gentrified neighbourhoods or highly disciplined academies of the sort referred to in the work of Christy Kulz.[2]

'Always the pride that prevailed in this working-class school was that it succeeded in turning out less recruits for the working-class than any other of its kind in the district. That less was still the majority, mind you, a great crowd that stayed on for two or three years after the scholarship culling was over and were then worked upon and encouraged to flash out what talents they had. But the school's official boast was not of them. The names in blue and red displayed on a whole row of rolls-of-honour hanging in the hall were those of educable small fry that had taken kindly to a scholastic bunk-up and been duly dispatched to the sphere of Higher Education.'[3]

For most state schools and colleges, it is a minority of students that win these places. But it is those students, not the majority who go on to less 'prestigious' education and employment destinations, who are often publicly celebrated. Schools in working-class areas celebrate the minority of students are set on path out of their class:

This pattern of celebrating the minority who succeed and move 'up'/out/ away from their community/class is endemic to the British education system. It is the logic of the 'ladder' that channels the value in education into narrow individual aspiration as opposed to collective power.[4] [5] We never question the implicit politics of value that lies behind celebrating entry to the Russell Group and Oxbridge. The question of whose education is worth something and, fundamentally, whose culture has value is always from the top down and never from the bottom up.

The way we think about the transition from school to university is embedded in an implicit class discourse which denigrates the post-school destinations of most young people, whether that be to a less prestigious university or college or into work. There is a logic to this, sociologically the route to stable, secure and well-paid employment still predominantly lies through these highly selective universities. But this realpolitik of post-16 education and the broader discourse around individual aspiration must also be contextualised against the collapse of secure, well-paid working-class jobs over the last four decades.[6] In this economic landscape, university becomes the only game in town.

Celebrating the selection of a minority of students into prestigious forms of 'higher' education has a long history and pre-dates de-industrialisation. For the first half of the 20th century, state elementary (i.e. primary) schools used their success at winning scholarships to grammar schools as a way to mark themselves out.[7] Primary schooling became, in the words

of historian of education Brian Simon, a 'pre-selective machinery' for the secondary grammar schools.[8] This changed the entire way that schooling for young children was run, with an emphasis on selection, learning for the exam and ranking of students, particularly in the last years of elementary/primary schooling. Similarly, in the inter-war and immediate post-war period, Oxbridge scholarships continued to be the 'blue riband' by which state grammar schools judged themselves.[9] There are clear parallels here between these historical patterns and the selection of students on entry to post-16 education and higher education. Celebrating Russell Group and Oxbridge success in today's field of post-16 education is part of a longer tradition of celebrating entry to selective forms of education.

Education as the site of conflict and struggle over culture, value and hierarchy

At the heart of this is a deeper problem – our school system does not simply create hierarchy, it actively celebrates it. By celebrating the achievement of the few the system reproduces inequality for the many. What we take to be the most valued form of education has always been the form and content of education that is valued by existing elites. This is not a coincidence – it is the result of a long quiet struggle in which educational and social elites have fought to maintain forms of school examination and institutional structures which actively foster and support academic and socio-economic hierarchies. When proposals for reform to A-level were considered over the 1970s and 1980s, the old universities and the public schools actively lobbied for A-levels to remain narrow, academically focussed and oriented around the needs of 'the most able'.[10] When GCSEs were created in the 1980s, a deliberate decision was made to keep a higher and a lower paper embedding the role of sorting for selection into the curriculum for students aged 14 and above.[11] In government, Labour shied away from more radical proposals to broaden post-16 education and move towards a broader Diploma style curriculum at 16-18.[12]

More recently the reform of A-levels and GCSEs since 2010 has seen the prioritisation of the needs of the most highly-selective elite universities. Making GCSEs 'harder' by stretching out the upper end of the scale of marks only serves to better disaggregate the top-end of the ability spectrum. The consultation on GCSE reform in 2013 suggested that it was private school associations and individual independent schools that were most in favour of reducing GCSE coursework and increasing the number of grades at the top-end of the ability spectrum.[13 14] These changes have reinforced the

selective logic and the orientation of school exams, curricula and structure around the needs of socially and academically selective universities and the high-attaining students they wish to recruit.

Within Labour there is not a tradition of educational reform which poses an alternative system of educational value. Too often the reforms that have been implemented have shied away from more radical or structural change. This was true under New Labour when the opportunity to adopt a diploma model at post-16 was passed up. Historically the embedding of hierarchy between universities and polytechnics occurred under a Labour government and the implementation of the tripartite secondary school system occurred under Labour. Labour has not tended to challenge the idea that our schools and our education should be judged by the value and culture of the elite educational institutions of the ruling and middle classes. In contrast, Conservative governments have been highly effective in crafting educational reform that precisely serves the ruling and middle class under the guise of focusing on the 'the able student' and making exams more 'rigorous'.

Our approach should acknowledge that what is needed is not simply to prioritise the needs of marginalised groups but to confront the educational dominance of the powerful. This requires a major break in educational thinking within the Labour Party and an acknowledgement that education is itself the stage for a larger conflict about culture, value and hierarchy.

Implications of university reform for schools and post-16 education

In the past CLASS has made several recommendations on schools policy and social justice. The NEU has made its own suggestions and it is not the purpose of this short paper to contribute to these debates. Instead in the final section of this piece, we turn instead to the implications of open university access and other reforms suggested elsewhere in this anthology.

1. Open access higher education - cascade effects on exams at 16 and 18

If higher education becomes open access and modular in nature in the way proposed by McLellan, Sperlinger and Pettigrew in this report, this would

have to take place alongside examinations reform at 16 and 18. Wrigley, writing for CLASS, notes that the Finnish model has no formal examinations until the age of 19 and it is likely that a similar model would have to be adopted here.[15] GCSEs have a distorting effect on the secondary curriculum with early preparation cutting back on the relative freedom of teaching at Key Stage 3 and the reformed exams prioritising high-attainers over the majority. If universities phase out academic selection, a major justification for GCSEs would also disappear and it is hard to see how GCSEs would continue to make sense. As a more immediate transitional step, removing requirements for students to pass GCSE English and Maths to continue study at post-16 would remove unnecessary pressures on students.

2. Extending the decolonisation of the curriculum into schools

Challenging the whiteness of the curriculum and decolonising the curriculum has been much more advanced in higher education than in secondary and post-16 education. If these calls are taken up and extended within higher education as, Jason Arday recommends in his piece in this report, then there is a clear basis for considering how this will and can feedback into schools.

3. Open and modular systems of higher education

If higher education was increasingly part-time and modular, the boundaries between what is now post-16 education and higher education would blur. Collaboration between school sixth-forms and universities has not always been straight-forward,[16] but foundation and access degrees commonly provided through Further Education Colleges, with connections to local post-1992 universities, have been profoundly successful. The extension of modular study where students could take courses provided through the local school or college alongside university foundation modules, and vice versa, should receive further specialist research and consideration.

4. Erosion of boundaries between post-16 educational providers and a democratic re-organisation of post-16

If the erosion of institutional boundaries within higher education is our goal, with hierarchies between post-1992 and older universities gradually disappearing, this will have knock-on effects for post-16 education. The original proposals for a comprehensive university were made by Robin

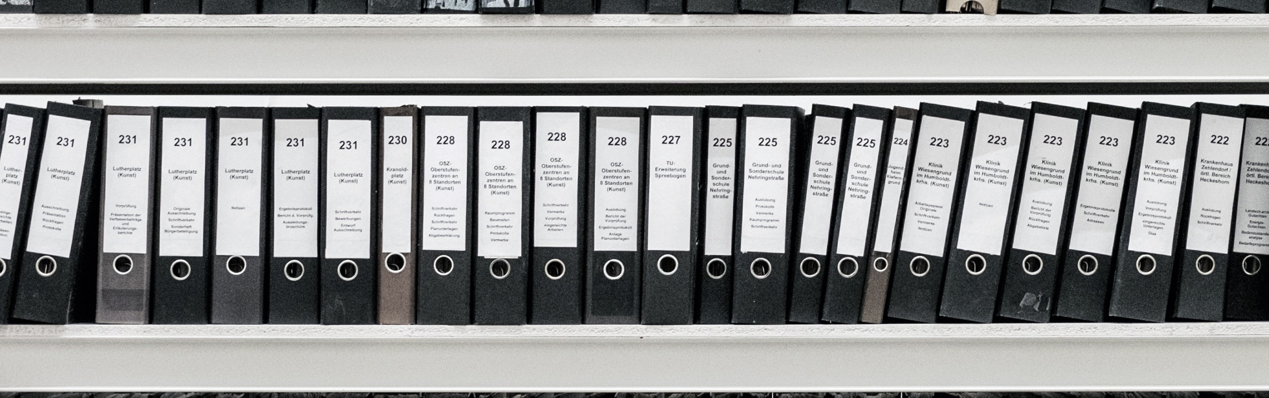
Pedley in 1977.[17] He suggested that a major failure of comprehensive school reform was not extending the reform to post-16 and higher education. In his proposals for widening and deepening the reforms applied to secondary education, he suggested how this could be extended into post-16 education. Under his proposals all post-16 and university providers in a local area would be coordinated democratically, with local committees planning and organising shared curricula, modules and common pathways (See Duckworth and Smith's proposals here on colleges as local hubs). Planned post-16 provision, as opposed to the chaotic model of sixth form expansion over the past decade, is not hard to justify. However, this must come from the bottom-up with democratic participatory structures at a local scale. Participatory and cooperative structures along the lines suggested in this report would have to be extended to post-16 and below (See chapters by Hall and Ridley). Majority control over education institutions by all staff (not just lecturers or teachers), students and local communities should be a basic starting point for all educational reform under a Labour government.

Shifting cultural hierarchies of knowledge – an end to elite cultural hegemony

The greatest effect of the changes to higher education that we outline here is the shift away from educational hierarchies in which institutions that educate the white middle and upper classes set cultural and educational standards. The negative effects of this are endemic to the school system as we have seen above and fundamentally de-value the educational worth and experiences of the majority and the marginalised. By seeking to challenge this, we will open up the need for broader and deeper dialogue about schooling and education more generally.

We are not alone in suggesting the need for structural, democratic and participatory change around education and cultural value. The Movement for Cultural Democracy have examined similar reforms in the arts. The changes that are needed are deep and whilst pragmatic and immediate policy change should and must be made under the next Labour government, this must take place within a deep, transformational agenda for education. This grounds democratic forms of political discussion and policy-making in education at the local level. Fundamentally this will mean thinking about education as a political tool for social change as well as something that is provided by the state for people. Our aims here are to make education our own - to create an educational culture which is democratic, popular, free and liberating. Our reforms must create space for deeper change ■

“Creating an educational culture which is democratic, popular, free and liberating”



Re-orientating Further Education to Champion Social Justice

Vicky Duckworth and Rob Smith make the case that colleges are ideally placed to tackle inequality

In this contribution, we provide an overview of the current situation in further education (FE) focusing on the problems arising from a narrow and reductive government view of its purpose and its service users and the market model in which colleges have been forced to operate for the last twenty five years. After drawing on our research in relation to these key issues, we make key recommendations for some meaningful policies for transition that would fully acknowledge and support the broader important contributions colleges make to social equality and justice within the communities they serve.

Further education is an overarching term that describes teaching and learning taking place mainly outside of school environments involving school leavers (although there is some 14-16 provision) and adults. Further education is largely shaped by historical, industrial and social factors closely related to local socio-economic circumstances in different towns and cities across the UK. While government skills policy over recent decades has become increasingly centralised, locally colleges continue to see their purpose and function in broader terms.

The transforming lives summative report exposes how the institutions the learners attend are rooted in the history of the region; this connectivity is an important feature of municipal landscapes across the country. Learners and teachers spoke passionately about how the opportunity to access education locally was particularly important in offering

accessible routes back into education and beyond. College mergers and deep resource cuts have hurt this locally engendered learning fabric and have put accessible local provision out of reach for a number of learners - for example, those who struggle with childcare and finance to pay for two long bus journeys across the city to start a class at 9.00 AM. Clearly then, leaders in institutions of further education need to ensure that there is recognition of accessibility and ensuring the cultural needs and diversity of the learners they serve are met by accessible educational sites that open doors to opportunity rather than erect barriers.

Colleges are typically seen as providers of vocational qualifications for 'unacademic' young people

Since incorporation, and under the premise of a 'knowledge economy', colleges have been tasked to provide a flexible, adaptable and skilled workforce to make the UK competitive in the globalised economy. The current policy emphasis in England appears to view the typical further education student as a working class 16-18 year old who needs 'skills' to get gainful employment. This instrumentalist policy view focuses on education for work positions and as a commodity, and marginalises issues of economic, political and social equality. The relationship between school and colleges is also poorly conceptualised and enacted. For example, there is a serious of lack of parity in pay between schools and colleges[1] – probably as a result of the marketisation brought about by incorporation. In addition, colleges are typically seen as providers of (only) vocational qualifications for young people who have not experienced 'academic' success in their schooling, whereas historically and still today, they continue to provide a range of academic and vocational courses. This matters because, as Reay et al have identified,[2] school success is linked to 'the amount and type of cultural capital inherited from the family milieu rather than by measures of individual talent or achievement'. By forcing colleges into a vocational silo, this policy emphasis perpetuates the ideologically violent division between academic and vocational qualifications and, through that, consolidates structural inequality.

The market structure has supported the intensification of the instrumentalist view of FE

The problems associated with this instrumentalisation of the FE 'sector' are made more pressing by the market structures that colleges have to operate under. Established by the Further and Higher Education Act (1992)

that removed colleges from local authority control, the current market model uses funding and 'incentivisation' to allow for on-going annual policy and curriculum intervention.[3] This market structure has supported the intensification of the instrumentalist view of FE – closely bound to the emergence of neoliberal policy with its emphasis on 'skills' rather than broader conceptualisations of education.[4] The ideological effect of the Further and Higher Education Act was to consolidate what has become known as 'the Further Education Sector', a generalised and 'abstract' space[5] that has facilitated policy making at a distance. This systematically superimposed a centralised drive to address economic and skills concerns over 'local ecologies'[6] – the dynamic relations and considerations within and specific to a local environment and context – of teaching and learning. This, we would argue, can impact negatively on students' needs, interests and agency.

Structural inequality – often strongly influenced by class – continues to shape life-courses and life-chances in decisive ways

Within this ideologically-driven meritocracy, class identities have been diminished in significance over recent decades. But while the idea of 'class' appears to be going out of fashion, our research affirms that structural inequality – often strongly influenced by class – continues to shape life-courses and life-chances in decisive ways.[3] For the children often marginalised by poverty, further education provides hope, routes and agency and can enhance their life chances, opportunities for future education or training and future employment.

The Further and Higher Education Act (1992) is no longer fit for purpose

The current qualification framework enforces a binary and, we would argue, deficit-based perception of young people as being either 'academic' or 'vocational'. In this, adult and further education are viewed as primarily focused on vocational learning and in this way further and adult education are 'classed' and structurally disadvantages some students.

A quarter century on from the F&HE Act, what is now clear is that the current further education market is not working. Our research exposes how the existing funding mechanism and market model objectifies students in ways that work against their interests. The common-sense

economised consciousness in the current marketised system objectifies students in three ways – a 'triple lock'[3] of objectification. The first layer of objectification arises from the 'skills' discourse which offers a conceptual framework for the positioning and understanding of further education as (mainly or only) important for the purpose of human capital production. The second layer of objectification is structural and is reified by the current qualifications framework and the expectations, categorisations and student learning pathways that these give rise to.

The third layer of objectification in the current system is a direct consequence of tightened budgets and the consequent need for 'efficiency'. Further education colleges have suffered more than schools and universities under austerity, losing more than 25% of their budgets for adult learning.[7] These cuts have exacerbated the already-there problem that has gridlocked every funding model since incorporation, exacerbated by an annual funding cycle, is that the recruitment of students has become incentivised as a 'bums on seats' exercise. The targeting of colleges for these swingeing cuts only serves to emphasise how policymakers in recent years have devalued further education. Overall, the market has become a mechanism for reinforcing the 'classing' of FE.

The positive impact of further education carries through to families, friends and communities – a ripple effect that produces broader social benefits

Despite the triple lock, our research for the Transforming Lives project[1] exposes the power of further and adult education to reach across diverse communities and challenge inequality. It is an enabler which draws on people's potential for personal and professional development in ways that enrich their lives. Adults who have previously been (and felt) marginalised and discarded are offered a lifeline that strengthens them and enables them to become successful students with agency. Importantly it supports people to rupture cycles of despair and mental ill-health enabling them to hope once more and move forward in their lives. The positive impact of further education carries through to families, friends and communities – a ripple effect that produces broader social benefits.

Many of the students in our study have been disadvantaged for a long time; just as many of these have experienced social and economic inequality most of their lives. The research also allowed insights into the circumstances individuals were born into, their legacies, and the socio/economic and political landscapes that frame the fields they enter and travel through. It exposed that rather than school being a meritocratic site, it was a site for intergenerational marginalisation, social exclusion, and labelling.

From the many examples covered in the project's interim report,[8] two students illustrate some key findings from the research.

Jade's story

Jade is a mother who attends adult literacy classes. Her experience of schooling was that she experienced being labelled and she left school with little hope. Being a mum motivates her and she has seen her confidence increase while studying and has learnt new literacies. Now, she has aspirations for her future and is determined to be the best possible role model for her son.

Jade's story reveals the complexities she experiences in her daily life and how she tries to make sense of them as a literacy student in a society based on inequality of opportunity and choice.

David's story

David stopped attending school regularly at eight years of age and instead started work with his father. David, a participant from a traveller background, spoke about his motivations for learning as being able to read to his four year old daughter. But these motivations also extended to his ability to take part in our democratic processes:

> *Now I can actually read and write and sign my own name. When I go to the doctor, I can sign a note… You need education to know what's going on outside: the politics and all that. I'd never voted in my life, ever. I read the thing that came through the letterbox and I voted for the first time*

Further education disrupts the rigid linearity of an education system that sorts students according to a qualification/age matrix

Neither Jade nor David attended compulsory education regularly. Both were both labelled by school teachers as being 'thick' and 'stupid'. But their narratives about FE show it can be disruptive of the rigid linearity of 'learning progression' at the heart of neoliberal models of education that assesses and sorts individuals according to a qualification/age matrix. Instead, it can offer organic tools for transformation[9] and consciousness raising,[10] acting as a hope catalyst for significant changes in students' lives.

Adult education is necessary for personal enrichment and growth during the lifecourse. Compulsory education alone is not enough to meet the needs of the rapid changes to the world of work that we have experienced,

are experiencing, and will continue to experience in the coming years. Adult education is needed so that individuals can take agency as they develop, and collectively adapt to the world. This growth is bound to and driven by hope. Without the hope that Further and Adult Education offers there can be little optimism for social justice and a future based on choice for all, regardless of the communities they are born into. Our argument is that colleges are ideally placed as vehicles for tackling social inequality and realising social justice: they are situated at the heart of their communities; they have long-standing and deep-rooted understanding of their local industries and they understand their students' needs.

Recommendations

We need a funding model that takes proper account of the socio-economic factors of the students that colleges are providing for. If students are coming from low income backgrounds and have additional needs associated with poverty, poor mental health and difficult home circumstances, then colleges need to be funded to address these.

The wraparound role of colleges in addressing students' needs must be acknowledged as an important aspect of FE pedagogy – by government, by funders, by Ofsted.

Colleges should be re-positioned centrally as the non-linear model of education that is required for the twenty first century. Policy and funding need to acknowledge the important role colleges are playing by providing flexible and part time routes not an additional part of a linear system. Colleges have to re-build damaged learner identities as a precursor to providing courses and qualifications. This often operates as the level of re-engagement but is an essential first step. Nowhere is this recognised in the current funding model.

Therefore, colleges need to be freed up from the prescriptive time-limits that are imposed on the courses they offer – that are imposed irrespective of the (educational and socio-economic) backgrounds of the students they provide for. The vital restorative pedagogical work that further education teachers have to undertake means that additional time is necessary if students are to be given equal opportunities to achieve the qualifications they take. The annual cycle of funding is a part of the way colleges are straight-jacketed in what they are able to achieve. These cruel and unjust restraints fail to take account of student needs and reduce FE's

ability to bring about social mobility.

College governance needs to be locally and democratically reconfigured. There is a danger that the current move towards delegating some further education provision (e.g. through combined local authorities) will result in a locally managed replication of national government's traditional supply-side policy model. Twenty five years of weighting governing bodies with the voices of employers has produced scant benefits – particularly in terms of curriculum. Colleges have a key role that makes them much more than a component in the supply of 'skills' for employers. The wider social and health benefits of further education require the involvement and coordination of local authorities. The ability of colleges to address social inequality needs to be enhanced.

We propose a localised FE system in which colleges are viewed as important hubs of social inclusion and cohesion that connect to schools pre-entry and employers and HE on exit and that are accessible to people of any age to access to achieve the personal and / or professional development they need to thrive. Funding needs to reflect this ■

CHANGING THE CULTURE WITHIN

Transforming higher education for disability inclusion

Many universities are disabling as working environments. Jen Remnant, Kate Sang, Thomas Calvard and James Richards look at solutions

Introduction

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial impact on their ability to undertake 'normal' daily activities. Such a definition includes an array of so-called impairments, including diagnoses of cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV, as well as mental health conditions, mobility impairments and long-term health conditions. Efforts have been made for a number of years to improve the representation of women in academia, including the introduction of Athena Swan accreditation for women working in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), and more recently attempts to improve BAME representation – though by no means are these efforts fait accompli. Further, there have been well evidenced attempts to improve disability inclusion for disabled students attending UK universities. In contrast, efforts to create accessible and inclusive work environments for disabled university staff have trailed behind, in

Obstacles to disabled academics

- Poor reporting of disability in academia
- HE system predicated on unattainable 'ideal' worker
- Poor policy framework for guidance and support

Policy recommendations for transformative change

- Clear recording, up to date and anonymised reporting pathways for disabled staff
- Consolidated disability relevant policies that are easy to access and transparent
- Placement of disability champions in positions of authority

organisational contexts that lack understanding and research in relation to disability.

In this short paper, drawing on the social model of disability , we provide background to the experiences of disabled academics and the workplace obstacles they encounter. We draw attention to groups working to improve disability inclusion and reflect on disability from an intersectional perspective to provide recommendations for how UK universities can be transformed to allow all employees to develop and flourish.

Disabled academia

There is an enduring gap between the rate of disabled people of working age and their non-disabled contemporaries.[1 2] This is referred to as the disability employment gap, and despite various government led policy initiatives the gap has not closed. Data from the Labour Force Survey,[3] show that around 80 per cent of non-disabled working age people are in work, compared with 48 per cent of disabled working age people, leaving a gap of 32 percentage points. Disabled scholars have argued that disabled people are excluded from the world of employment.[4] This exclusion from the paid workforce has been central to the development of the social model of disability's notion of disablement.[5]

Evidence suggests that the disability employment gap is replicated, and possibly exaggerated, in academic settings;[6] in the academic year 2012/2013 approximately 4 per cent of university staff declared a long-term health condition or impairment when overall, 19 per cent of working age adults have a known disability.[7] Disabled academics appear to be evenly distributed across STEM and non-STEM disciplines suggesting that the issue is sector wide.[6] However, these estimates can be assumed to be conservative on the basis that reporting rates of disability in the workplace remain low; likely a result of perceived stigma, poor recording practices and lack of information regarding legislative protections for disabled workers. Consequently, there is little concrete data regarding the number of disabled people following academic careers.

Research on higher education and disabled staff and students is arguably scarcer overall, but tends to echo many of the themes from general literature on disabled populations and employment above. From the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, access for disabled staff and students to universities has improved to some extent, as have support services.

Although many practices remain disabling and ableist, there is growing engagement from the disabled peoples' movement to raise social and political awareness of disabilities on campus, as well as challenging how university disciplines produce knowledge.[4] An 'outside in' approach to policy is advocated – where the direct experiences of disabled people are linked to wider political factors.

Studies of the 'impairment effects' experienced by disabled academics on their careers argue that higher education policy can set an example in recognising impairments as a legitimate organisational issue requiring an appropriate organisational response.[8] Small-scale studies of disabled academics in Canada and the UK do highlight a range of issues to do with the ableism of performance standards and individual pressures to be 'good enough'.[9] [10] These are likely to have widespread negative effects on morale in the sector and contribute to increased struggles with a diverse range of impairments, as well as preventing improvements in representation of disabled academics at senior levels.

Where there is disabled progression or leadership in higher education, it may therefore come at great personal cost and additional labour. Such labour arises from the fight for adjustments, indicating a need for clearer support structures, greater investment in opportunities for professional development, and improved awareness generally of equality and diversity.[11]

Pilot research funded by EPSRC Institutional Sponsorship and Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh has revealed that disabled employees and those experiencing long term health conditions face numerous barriers to remaining in STEM careers, both in the lead and partner institutions of the research, as well as other comparable Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).[12] Disabled people leave academic careers when progressing from PhD to post-doctoral research positions, and from post-doctoral research positions to lecturer roles.[12] Disabled researchers report that they feel that there are limitations on their ability to work in sufficiently flexible ways to accommodate both their work responsibilities and health. Researchers pointed to the difficulty securing smaller funds for part time work, particularly within STEM disciplines, and the various ways in which routes to promotion and academic progression were closed off to disabled employees.[12]

Across the employment trajectory of disabled academics, the disabling nature of universities as working environments can be divided into three key problem areas; environmental, attitudinal and policy based. Specific

environmental challenges can include shared offices and labs (e.g. for autistic researchers), conducting fieldwork (e.g. for researchers with mobility impairments) and inaccessible on-site buildings and rooms.[9] Distances between work stations and appropriate toilet facilities can represent a significant barrier to meaningful engagement for academics experiencing a variety of long-term health conditions and impairments, including women with gynaecological health conditions, as can the distance to or limited number of accessible parking bays.

Attitudinal obstacles to inclusive and accessible academic workplaces are by their nature more difficult to measure, and potentially address, than environmental barriers. They are maintained by employers, who in other sectors, have been found to engage in positive policy-like rhetoric about employees with disabled employees, they continue to harbour negative views about disabled works capability and productivity.[13 14] Ideas about ideal workers and ideal academics in terms of working hours and productivity can be absorbed by disabled workers making them nervous to disclose diagnoses or seek support.

Facilities within larger employers, that are ostensibly available to provide support for disabled employees such as Human Resources and Occupational Health, are widely considered to be part of organisational disciplinary apparatus by both well-meaning line managers and disabled employees, meaning that vital avenues for alteration are not always accessed.[15] Current promotion processes and expectations rely on the previously mentioned ideal worker, someone who is able (and willing) to work over their contracted hours, have international mobility, and evidence excellence in research, teaching and, if relevant to their contract, administration. Whilst new avenues are opening across universities, for example, research only promotion tracks, these are rare and often rely on the candidate accessing external funding and fixed term contracts.

One overarching issue reported by disabled academics is the adequacy of extant organisational policies and line managers/supervisors' understanding and awareness of relevant legal/policy frameworks.[16] One aspect of how universities are managed includes the regular rotation of heads of department. Academics may find themselves disclosing their disabled status to line managers in order to secure necessary adjustments, which are often ad hoc and informal,[17] but then find that their line manager changes. Academics have reported that this has resulted in repeated disclosure, making them appear difficult or demanding in the workplace, contributing to further attitudinal barriers.

Enabling academia

Recommendation 1: Clear up-to-date recording and anonymised reporting pathways for disabled staff

Currently researchers are unable to ascertain the scope of ableism in UK academic institutions. Limitations to the recording of the number of disabled academics employed in UK Higher Education Instututions (HEIs) means that it is impossible to get accurate statistics for the number of disabled academics. To address this, the first key policy recommendation of this paper is to design a responsive recording system whereby disabled academics can disclose that they have an impairment both when they are first recruited, as well as during their academic career. With attitudinal barriers as they are, in the first instance this process would need to be anonymised. The recording of this information, along with other information regarding post and grading, would provide a baseline for universities, and allow researchers to ascertain how many academics are disabled, and whether there is a disability pay gap.

Organisational policy relevant to disabled academics is often not apparent on university HR website, sometimes as a result of policy naming choices. For example, policies relating to bullying and harassment in the workplace are often titled 'Dignity at Work'. Other times this is because policy points of relevance to disabled people are separated across a number of different policies relating to protected characteristics. Our analysis suggests that policies explicitly relating to health are predominantly focused on managing attendance. To address this gap in organisational policies, a key recommendation from this paper for HEIs in the short term is to consolidate all policy information that might be of relevance to disabled employees, or line managers managing a disabled member of staff as has been done at Dundee University.[18] Ensure that access to this information is uncomplicated and accessible to all staff and that staff in human resources departments are aware and able to signpost staff adequately to the right policies.

Recommendation 2: Consolidated disability-relevant policies that are easy to access and transparent

Further policy recommendations relate to the burden of labour in creating accessible and inclusive working spaces. At present it is incumbent on

disabled academics to disclose their condition, and request workplace adjustments. We suggest that this burden is switched to employers. For example, many universities in North America require that all faculty job candidates provide a statement setting out their commitment to equality and diversity. A similar approach should be adopted in the UK, with an explicit and demonstrated commitment to disability inclusion in job descriptions, followed up in annual reviews and promotion applications.

Complementary to this process should be the streamlining of promotions processes and requirements for candidates at the early stages of their career. HEIs should strive to remove the need for excessive paperwork completion, burdensome for all staff disabled or non-disabled, but especially for those experiencing impairments or conditions that make writing lengthy documents difficult. In terms of progression, expectations relating to and individual's research income, publication profile and external would should be pro-rata. More broadly we recommend that universities employ a process of regrading rather than promotion. Currently, academic staff must demonstrate that they are already working at the level of the grade above in order to be promoted, rather than being promoted on the basis of their potential.

UK HEIs need to remove bureaucratic institutional policies which are paperwork heavy in order for line managers to provide adjustments. This should include a move away from the prescribed insistence on medical reports. These, again, place considerable burden on the disabled staff member to secure agreement from medical professionals regarding their condition or impairment. This reliance reinforces a power relationship between medical professionals and disabled people that has long been criticised by disabled activists and scholars, as well as drawing unnecessarily on National Health Service resources. This re-situating of disabled people as experts in their own experience supports our long-term recommendation for transformative change within UK HEIs to develop environments and working cultures which are inclusive and adjustable and consequently remove the need for individualised reasonable adjustments.

Recommendation 3: Placement of disability champions in positions of authority

Key to the development of inclusive working environments for university staff would be the involvement of disabled people in all stages of university planning, across estates, financial planning, teaching and research

strategies. Organisations such as the National Association of Disabled Staff Networks[19] could offer invaluable support and expertise to HEIs, as could trade union representatives. Features of this culture change would include disability champions in positions of authority within university hierarchies, ensuring that accessibility and inclusion is on the agenda for all university decision making.

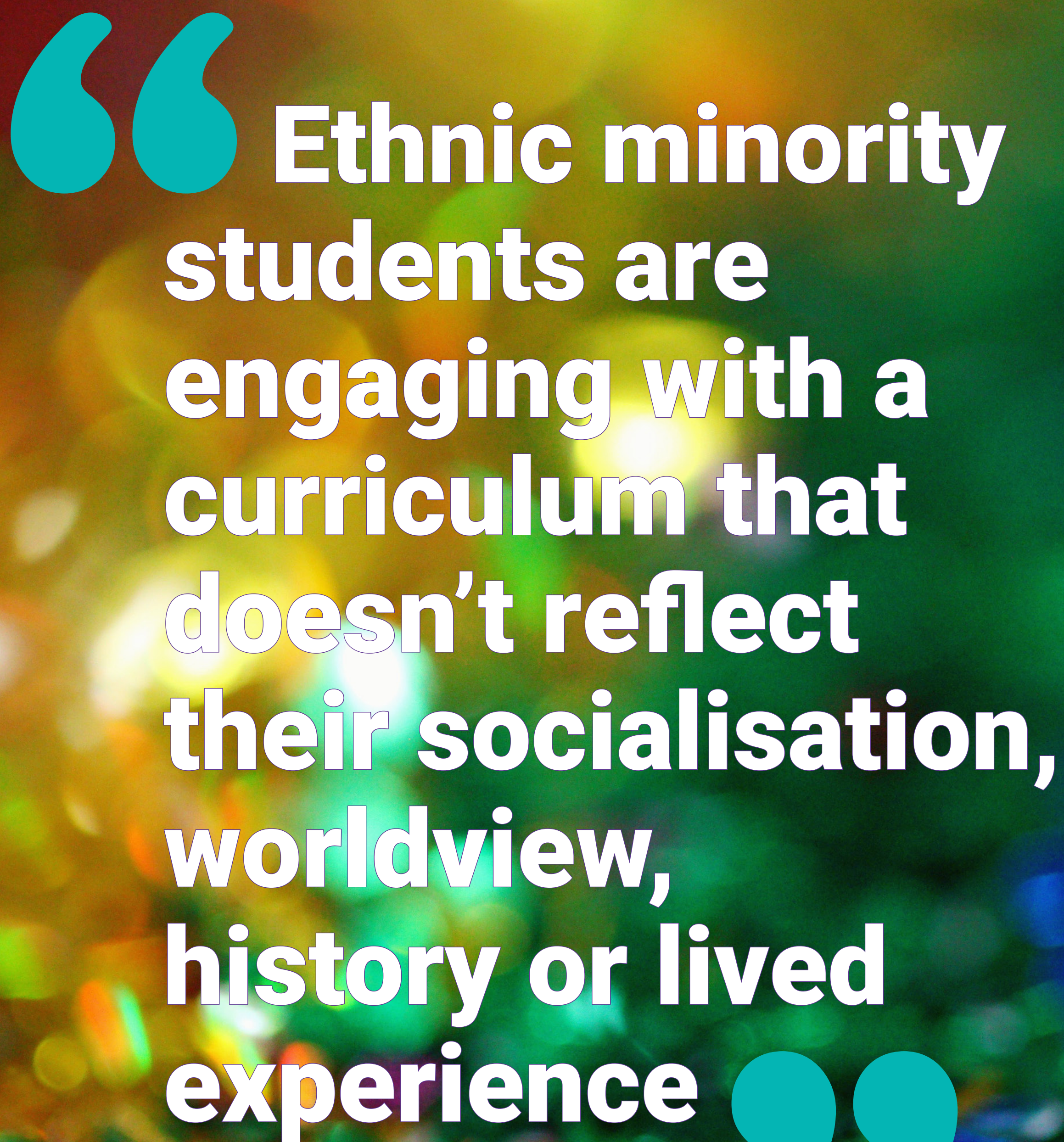
Universities must work closely and in partnership with trade unions if they are to improve the working conditions of disabled staff. Our previous work has shown that trade unions can act as key agents in the facilitation of disability inclusion in workplace.[20] In recognising the importance of trade unions as representatives of staff, universities can radically shift their policies and processes towards inclusivity. Such activities should include recognising the expertise of union disability champions and representatives and working closely when policies and practices are being developed. Doing so will help to reduce the likelihood of unintended consequences for disabled staff.

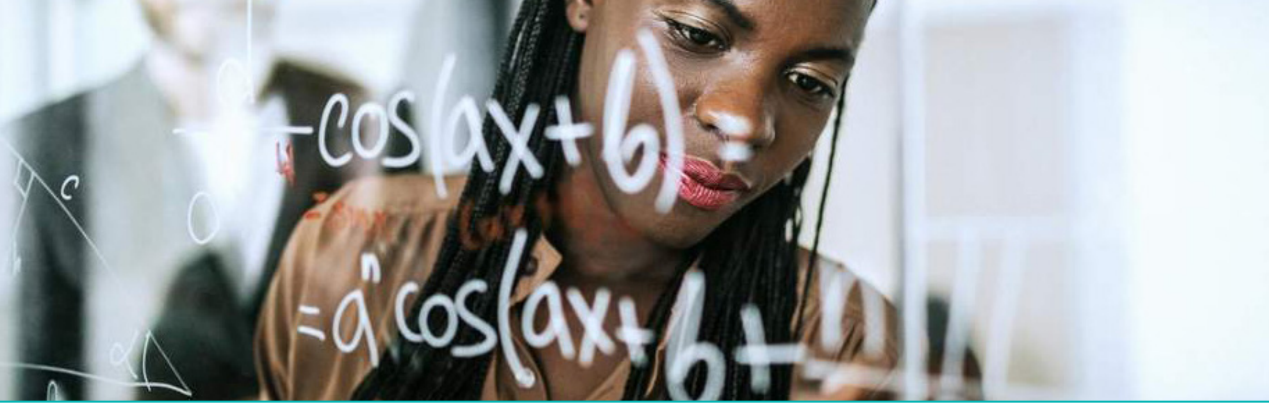
Recommendation 4: Greater funding provisions for disabled academics and research

A last recommendation is targeted particularly at academic funders and research councils. Fundamental, transformative change must be led at all levels, not just individual employees or individual organisations. We recommend in the strongest of terms that research councils include soft money in grants to cover any costs relating to reasonable adjustments and workplace inclusivity, and actively seek to fund the scholarship of disabled academics.

By radically altering academia to start from assumptions of accessibility, UK HEIs will improve the working conditions for all employees, including non-disabled staff who are still likely to be temporarily incapacitated by ill health or injury during their career. Similarly, policy alterations that support disabled academics invariably improve working practices for other academics, including women who also often have interrupted trajectories, often due to caring responsibilities.

If universities in the UK are to maintain and build on their global reputation for research and teaching excellence then they must learn to value all of their community members, including staff. With an inclusive working environment will not only improve the lives of those who work in universities, but we will have the potential to radically transform the research and teaching that form the core activities of higher education. A more inclusive academic workforce will help universities in the UK to better solve the problems of society that it seeks to address ■


Ethnic minority students are engaging with a curriculum that doesn't reflect their socialisation, worldview, history or lived experience



Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic academic under-representation and the dominant Eurocentric HE Curriculum

Universities have traditionally aligned themselves with equality, but the reality is different, argues Jason Arday

Introduction

The dearth of representation regarding Black, Asian and Ethnic Minorities (BAME) academics within higher education (HE) has become a salient issue, as apparently egalitarian policy commitments to equality and diversity continue to be contradicted by universities. This issue has run alongside the systematic omission of BAME students within elite universities within the United Kingdom (UK). This is in spite of increased calls for greater diversification.[1] Ethnic minority representation in higher education within the UK, particularly when aligned to the primacy of race, remains problematic as BAME academics continuously encounter institutional and organisational barriers in attempting to navigate academic careers within the Academy.[2,3,4]

Recent discourses[5,6,7,8] concerning the paucity of diversification regarding BAME participation within the Academy has illuminated the pattern of institutional racism

which pervades within higher education and continues to systematically disadvantage BAME individuals.[9][10] Such patterns involve lack of access, unconscious biases, racial micro-aggressions, hyper-surveillance and a significant lack of representation at senior leadership level.[11][12]

Historically, higher education has always attempted to reflect an inclusive space which embraces the notion of egalitarianism and equal access. The packaging of this narrative resembles a sector that still remains largely White, often functioning to position ethnic minorities on the periphery of academia.[13] Understanding the landscape of academia in the UK is central to unpacking the lack of diversification within the sector. Curricula significantly impacts upon this phenomena. Canons of knowledge within higher education curricula have historically resembled a dominant Eurocentric curriculum, often omitting and devaluing the contribution of faculty of colour, ensuring that ethnic minorities continue to remain on the periphery of academia further heightening issues around belonging and marginalisation.[14]

There is a tension which has now emerged regarding the types of embodied knowledge that are valued within normative White academic spaces.[15][16] Attempts to decolonise the existing curriculum within higher education, have often resulted in a reluctance to acknowledge the role that BAME academics play in representing and delivering a curriculum that is truly reflective of ethnically diverse, multi-cultural society. There is also a need for BAME students to observe a culturally-rich and diverse curricula that speaks to their own life histories and experiences in a way that is not distorted or selective in terms of the narrative presented.[17][18]

Challenging the dominant Eurocentric Curriculum in Higher Education

Curriculum design within higher education has been a significant factor in discerning issues concerning engagement, belonging and marginalisation. Consequently, recent research[19] has illuminated that BAME students are often given no agency or autonomy in collaboratively negotiating the canons of knowledge provided. In many cases, ethnic minority students are engaging with a curriculum that does not reflect their socialisation, worldview, history or lived experience (see Hall in this collection). There are concrete arguments[20][21] to suggest that any body of knowledge solely produced by only White scholars is not truly reflective of a multi-

culturally diverse society, and negates the contribution of Black scholars to contributions or canons of knowledge.

There have been commentaries[22] proffered which suggest that applying a broader canvas to contributions of knowledge would actually limit the potential aspirations of BAME students, leaving them without access to 'perceived' necessary historical, philosophical and intellectual grounding. Such claims fall down upon the basic premise that the Academy is inherently White, and often through this supremacist guise of normativity, knowledge is often cultivated and constructed through an exclusive and narrow lens that has historically omitted the contribution of people of colour as constructors of knowledge.[23]

Pedagogically, there is an obligation within our higher education institutions to ensure that the knowledge provided is historically representative of an ever-changing global community. In attempting to unpack the power and privilege that pervades this discourse it is important to assert that the continual advancement of a nuanced and constrained curriculum also disadvantages White students with regards to broadening and challenging their own worldview particularly against dominant discourses and stereotypes concerning people of colour.[24]

Within the UK, we have begun to observe a resistance towards the knowledge only being advanced through these canons with movements such as Why is my Curriculum White?; and Why isn't my Professor Black? Fundamentally, both campaigns share a commitment towards decolonising the Academy and diversifying a dominant Eurocentric, White curriculum that does not acknowledge nor reflect the contribution of people of colour and the diasporic, historical lived experiences of ethnic minority students and migrant populations.[25][26]

There have been aspects of the Eurocentric curriculum that have attempted to present a multi-cultural discourse. However, an important distinction has been the reluctance of the Academy to address the colonial past and its impact on present society. Senior leaders tasked with this responsibility often do not strategically prioritise this agenda despite being tasked with a remit to facilitate the best learning experience for all types of learners. BAME students, by proxy of paying tuition fees, subscribe to the idea of an inclusive curriculum that challenges, uncovers and dismantles the hidden power structures that are responsible for inequality and institutional racism. This forges an essential part of what still remains a largely exclusionary curriculum.

The pervading issue here is that the Academy has continuously ignored aspects concerning 'decolonising the curriculum' as part of a central feature towards endorsing and promoting an inclusive curriculum. The continuation of such an exclusionary curriculum remains so because the lack of diversification regarding academic and the prioritisation of dominant Eurocentric knowledge continue to remain habitual.[27] Fundamentally, the problem stems from a lack of diversification among Academy staff that is truly reflective of ever-increasing diverse student populations. Beyond just having greater representation, diversifying academic staff cohorts also facilitates different forms of pedagogy that dismantle and disrupt the historical landscape of education.

Within this landscape, educational institutions, in particular, have played a fundamental role in reproducing White privilege. Sadly higher education has been complicit in reinforcing racist and stereotypical ascriptions against ethnic and minority groups through varying tools of Whiteness such as racist micro-aggression.[28] [29] Attempting to dismantle the physical, cultural and intellectual environment of the Academy is problematic because as Peters[30] states its legacy is built on White domination.

Reforming the curricula to produce something that is wholly representative is something that must be considered by Parliamentarians, policy-makers and senior leaders within universities. A wholesale review of curriculum from school to university which responds to calls to de-colonise the curriculum is what is required. This review requires and overall review regarding the governance and ownership of curricula as this significantly impacts the type of knowledge content made available to students. Such action is urgent as the BAME attainment gap widens and a significant reason for this deficit has been the lack of self and cultural familiarisation with the current curricula provided which largely only represents, acknowledges and celebrates White European culture.[31]

Understanding how we improve BAME Representation in Higher Education

A significant and persistent problem that permeates considerations about dominant Eurocentric curricula is the paucity of BAME academics within the sector. Consequently, the dearth of representation does impact upon the diversification of knowledge made available to students within the sector. Universities have traditionally aligned themselves with the notion of

equality, however their inequitable structures systematically disadvantage BAME academics and as a result they are in fact deepening inequality. There is a growing body of literature which has attempted to illuminate patterns of under-representation among university academic workforces.

Recent commentaries[32 33 34 35] have focused on the racism and discrimination faced by students in higher education and the inequalities they continue to face thereafter.

Developing a discourse which truly embraces the idea of inclusion and diversity has been challenging due to the focus on BAME representation traditionally receiving low-priority status among senior leaders within universities.[36 37] The stimulus for diversifying curricula and canons of knowledge must be situated within a discourse that attempts to acknowledge that all types of students benefit from diversity. Furthermore, exposure to differing canons support learners in not only taking their place within a global society but also in understanding how particular minority groups are systemically marginalised and disadvantaged.

The need for greater BAME representation in the Academy is twofold; first, universities are a microcosm of society and to this end this should be reflected throughout all university mechanisms and structures such as curriculum and staff workforces; and, second, deeply entrenched racialised patterns within the sector marginalise ethnic minorities and strengthen the stranglehold of privilege and power that has propelled Whiteness as a phenomena at the expense of BAME individuals.

The present system is divisive and fails to acknowledge the agency of greater ethnic minority diversification as an instrument for greater inclusion and societal representation.

The current model has been sustained on a normative and somewhat entitled hegemony of power and privilege. Essentially, the existing model embodies and facilitates White privilege, and fundamentally, this model is no longer compatible with agendas concerning race equality and diversity interventions (Advance HE's Race Equality Charter) tasked with dismantling institutional racism in all of society's major institutions. Furthermore, there is an argument to suggest that the existing model also connects through to other sectors of education that point towards historically exclusionary curriculums which omits particular histories and marginalises a particular

cohort of learners.[38] There is need to view this as a deeply embedded problem that is systemic and structural while facilitating all the hallmarks of colonialism and institutional racism. Holding a lens to this issue is imperative, but perhaps more important is accountability and moving away from the notion that the issue of BAME representation is a plight that should be unravelled and solved by those ethnic minorities actually experiencing the disadvantage.

From a pragmatic viewpoint, this would be challenging because often BAME individuals are not equipped with the autonomy or power to influence change within often heavily dominated middle-class White spaces. Structurally, institutions must be challenged to develop interventions that look to improve the educational experience for BAME learners and provide better attainment outcomes. This is particularly pertinent in light of the current attainment gap between White and Black students qualifying with a 1st or 2:1 degree, which is currently 24%.[39] Diversifying academia is perhaps a simplistic approach to diversifying curricula but it is more immediately attainable and achievable than the wholesale structural change needed which has historically been hard to implement. However, this does not detract from the need for a deeper review of university structures from a Parliamentary and policy-maker perspective with staff and student representation central to any reviewing body. The current models and structures are not fit for purpose and require dismantling and re-assembling to ensure the sector is functioning to provide an inclusive and diverse space for all individuals wishing to enter the Academy and engage in the knowledge construction and dissemination process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The landscape and current structure of higher education requires dismantling in order to be fully representative and more inclusive. There is a collective responsibility required in dismantling racism within higher education if the sector is to serve its function to promote social mobility and improve individual lives through the vehicle of education. An overhaul of the current system may seem insurmountable upon initial consideration but university institutions must work harder to address the deeply entrench inequalities that blight and compromise equality and equity within the sector.

As mentioned earlier, universities are a microcosm of society and in essence should be doing everything structurally and culturally possible to facilitate

the needs of a multi-cultural and diverse learning community. This becomes even more prevalent with increasing tuition fee costs for students and an increasingly competitive job market. Therefore, the learning space must be reflective of a curriculum that embodies and reflects all students' lived experiences, particularly from a cultural and historical viewpoint.

For universities truly to embrace the ideals associated with diversity there must be recognition amongst institutional leaders, Parliamentarians, policy-makers and the sector more generally to address the deeply-entrenched systemic problems that reinforce inequality within the Academy. There are three factors that impact this discourse structural, organisational, and cultural.[40 41 42]

Structural: The autonomous nature of higher education means that institutions must invest more funding (specifically student tuition fees) on diversifying internal structures to ensure students as consumers are provided with an inclusive experience that is reflective of multi-cultural hybridity particularly within the university space. Contrastingly, there is a need to challenge the narrative of students as 'consumers' and engage more with a discourse that identifies more with how we provide an inclusive and holistic experience for learners from all types of backgrounds. This discourse truly embraces the idea of difference and is more reflective of an ever-increasing multi-cultural society. The diversity of stakeholders with decision-making powers can often dictate how narratives concerning 'inequality' (or equality and diversity) are addressed.

Organisational: The nature of job titles and roles within higher education, particularly in leadership positions, has always been problematic with regards to identifying the locus for change or 'ownership' of the BAME attainment agenda. Typically, BAME attainment has always been situated between equality and diversity interventions and teaching and learning initiatives which historically have not resulted in cultivating sector-wide and institutional change. Universities must prioritise and understand the impact of a dominant Eurocentric curriculum and consider how this omits ethnic minority learners. Universities must consider the importance of an 'inclusive curriculum' that not only speaks to students lived experiences and cultural history but de-centres dominant Eurocentric discourses as the only canon of knowledge to be considered. Institutions should engage more collaboratively with students to design curricula for example students should have a significant role in shaping the type of curricula provided and have equal agency to that of academic staff, in attempting to be truly inclusive. The universities of Kent and Kingston have engaged in such endeavour and as a result have become sector-leading examples with regards to engaging with students collaboratively to develop curricula that allows BAME students to develop a sense of ownership and belonging.

Cultural: Universities and the sector more generally must accept that the Academy is unequal and in many cases reinforces inequality. Resistance by universities in diagnosing

and acknowledging the problems that permeate the BAME attainment gap reinforce a culture of inequality. This has been a significant barrier towards effecting positive change. To ensure penetrative and sector-wide change BAME students and staff must be a part of the curriculum design process and consulted during revalidation and modification processes to university degree programmes. This involvement would be a significant step towards creating a more inclusive culture that values and acknowledges the importance of diversity and BAME involvement within curriculum and content design. As custodians of the Academy, there must be a collective obligation and responsibility towards ensuring universities are made accountable for creating cultures that ensure all students are able to leave university with good degree attainment and outcomes. Institutions can make inroads on these aspects by diversifying leadership teams and repositioning the narratives regarding decision-making processes to include BAME Senior Leaders. Currently, within the sector there is a paucity of BAME Senior Leaders which has adversely affected BAME students and staff. Diverse and more representative voices within leadership teams would positively impact the predominantly and historically White terrain of academia ■

“The changes that are needed are deep and fundamentally this will mean thinking about education as a political tool for social change as well as something that is provided by the state for people”

What would a survivor-centred higher education sector look like?

Anna Bull, Jayne Bullough and Tiffany Page call for a transformation of relationships of power within HE

Violence against women and girls (VAWG), and sexual violence as one aspect of this, is recognised as a violation of women's human rights and is understood to be both a cause and consequence of gender inequality.[1] The United Nations Declaration on the elimination of violence against women, which the UK government has adopted, defines VAWG as:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Sexual violence is recognised as a form of VAWG in that it 'disproportionately affects women and girls and/or is targeted at women and girls, because they are women and girls'.[2] A VAWG framework recognises that men/boys can and do experience sexual violence and other forms of abuse, yet also acknowledges the disproportionately gendered way in which this violence is being both experienced and perpetrated. It also acknowledges that that sexual violence is not experienced by everyone in exactly the same ways – experiences of violence and abuse intersect with multiple inequalities around ethnicity, sexuality, age, disability, religion and class. While it is not possible to give robust prevalence data on sexual violence in UK HE as studies have not been carried out, research from the US and Australia has found that the majority of female undergraduates experience sexual harassment while in higher education (HE), and between 7 per cent and 11 per cent of female students have experienced non-consensual sexual contact or sexual assault during a given year.[3] These figures are even higher for students identifying as trans, queer, or non-binary. For some of

students, particularly postgraduates, this sexual harassment or misconduct comes from higher education staff, with 22 per cent of female postgraduate students in a large-scale study from the US reporting having experienced sexual harassment from academic staff. Male students are impacted by staff sexual misconduct in higher education, with the US figures reporting 16 per cent postgraduate and 5 per cent undergraduate.[4]

In this article we focus on one aspect of VAWG: how the higher education sector can prevent and respond to sexual violence that takes place within HE institutions. This article asks, therefore, how could HE institutions in the UK lead the way in transforming societal attitudes to sexual violence? What would a survivor-centred higher education institution look like? And what policy mechanisms and levers can we use to get there? We write as activists, experts and academics who are trying to make change within the sector. Jayne Bullough is a frontline practitioner within a Rape Crisis Centre (RCC) specialising in development and delivery of sexual violence training and prevention. In working directly with survivors of sexual violence, RCCs have developed decades of accumulative 'practice-based' evidence, which constitute an 'epistemic community' and informs our expertise and ethos in responding, supporting and preventing all forms of sexual violence. Anna Bull and Tiffany Page are academic sociologists and directors of The 1752 Group, a research and lobby organisation addressing staff-student sexual misconduct in higher education. The 1752 Group is working at a national level with organisations such as the National Union of Students and Universities UK to develop a robust sector-wide response to this issue.

We outline a set of principles that can underpin a whole-institution approach to addressing sexual violence, and that can also inform government policy, sector-wide change and the ongoing development of a regulatory framework around this issue. We use the term regulatory framework to refer to the set of institutions that act in a pseudo-regulatory way, by gathering data, producing guidelines, recommending and enacting cultural change, or in the case of the Office for Students, registering and monitoring institutions (although it is important to note that there is no equivalent regulator in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland). Higher education institutions in the UK pride themselves on their autonomy, and therefore changes are usually led by the sector and individual institutions, rather than being implemented in a top-down way. While this autonomy has advantages, to date it has led to inconsistent change in responding to sexual violence (see *Universities UK's report Changing the Culture: One Year On*).[5] It also means that bringing about reforms in order to ensure students' safety in higher education is

not straightforward. Proposals for change need to be balanced between supporting the sector to lead on proactive steps towards change while also recognising that market forces incentivise institutions to avoid reputational damage, reduce legal liability and save money by keeping sexual violence under the radar, hidden, or silenced.

Transforming higher education

Responses to sexual violence in HE must start from the perspective of understanding the power imbalances and inequalities that enable it to take place. A VAWG framework, as described above, offers a gendered perspective in which universities can develop awareness of intersecting inequalities and power dynamics to develop best practice responses. As the End Violence Against Women Coalition have outlined (2014), this perspective must be fundamental to all policies in addressing violence against women and girls. In higher education, this perspective has to address the various power imbalances and inequalities existing in HE, which include inequalities relating to gender, race, class, sexuality, religion and disability, as well as the power imbalances between staff and students and between staff at different levels of the institutional hierarchy. The principles for addressing sexual violence that we outline below are grounded in working against the dynamic of abuse, following the principles laid out by Rape Crisis South London.[6] These state that:

Sexual violence is about power and entitlement. Survivors of sexual violence have experienced someone having absolute power over them, someone restricting and ignoring their agency and right to make choices and for these to be respected. When someone perpetrates an act or often acts of sexual violence, they are telling the survivor that they are not important and that their wants and needs don't matter.

Within higher education institutions, which tend to reproduce themselves as white, male, middle-class, able-bodied, and heterosexual, this dynamic of power and entitlement is mediated through the institution's structures of dominance and hierarchy. The structures of power and entitlement that are part of the very fabric of the institution therefore create a 'conducive context' for sexual violence.[7] By contrast, a survivor-centred approach takes a starting point that is the opposite of these dynamics, by respecting survivors' choices, and prioritising belief, visibility, transparency, accountability and empowerment. These five principles should therefore form the basis of institutional responses to sexual violence, as well as informing policy approaches to addressthis issue.

Principle One: Belief

The first principle is believing survivors. This is because we live in a society where myths about sexual violence – what is possible or likely, or how a 'normal' victim acts – are prevalent, and these affect responses to disclosures and reports of sexual violence. For example, myths about false accusations of sexual violence may affect how an individual or an institution responds to a report or disclosure. False accusations – only 4% of cases reported to the UK police are found or suspected to be false[8] – are much rarer than the proportion of survivors who don't feel able to come forward to report their experience. Believing survivors is therefore an integral part of due process; a neutral investigation can and should still take place within this framework of belief.

The principle of belief should affect both institution-level and national policy-level responses to SV. For example, while policy recommendations often focus on the importance of increasing reporting, it is crucial to understand the barriers to reporting for survivors and how existing reporting procedures, often result in experiences of re-victimisation and re-traumatisation. Therefore, the principle of believing survivors also means bringing in survivor voices – through partnerships with survivor-led organisations, and through drawing on the expertise of survivors who have reported within their institutions – to the centre of institutional responses to sexual violence. Universities should draw on survivor voices to implement appropriate processes and test their effectiveness before encouraging people to report to the institution. Campaigns or policies that encourage increased reporting before appropriate institutional processes are in place are, in effect, using survivors and their experiences as expendable tools in bringing to light problems with existing systems.

Principle Two: Visibility

A second principle is visibility. Too often, sexual violence is hidden in plain sight, and this can be one reason why survivors feel unable to report or disclose their experiences, as they feel that people around them knew what was going on but no-one reported it. This lack of response of bystanders to react or respond can also be used by perpetrators to normalise and legitimise their actions. Therefore, a crucial step for a whole-institution response is making sexual violence and harassment visible as contravening accepted standards of behaviour. Those whose perspective is least visible, such as students of colour, disabled students or LGBTQ+ students, should

be centred in such processes. In recent years, there have been many successful awareness-raising campaigns within HE institutions and by the National Union of Students. However, as well as student-facing campaigns, sexual violence needs to be made visible at all levels of the institution. This might include highlighting where sexual violence exists within the curriculum; within staff experiences; and within data produced by the institution (as outlined below). Making sexual violence visible continues the powerful work of the #MeToo movement by ensuring survivors realise they are not alone, giving a name to experiences that may not be easily labelled, and holding institutions accountable for both responding to reports and enacting disciplinary procedures that deliver just outcomes, and preventing behaviour from continuing.

On the level of national policy or sector-wide action, visibility is an area where a lot of progress has already been made, through Scotland's Equally Safe in Higher Education toolkit, and the HEFCE-funded Catalyst projects addressing sexual violence, hate crime, and online harassment.[9] These have generated good practice that is being shared, but this work needs ongoing resources, including national and regional networks to share and monitor activities across different institutions, and to make sure that all institutions are supported to embed this work. This is one area where the current autonomy of HE institutions can be supported and drawn on, by providing funding and incentives to support actions within individual institutions. An annual, national campaign on prevention could be developed, as well as by incentivising and supporting existing and new partnerships between HE institutions and local violence against women organisations, as discussed below. The key is that these campaigns and networks need to be ongoing, and have resources committed to expanding their scope of activities and building on what has been learned from previous years. A further tool to increase visibility is regular climate surveys on campus, to measure the effectiveness of campaigns, students' and staff's perceptions and attitudes, and to understand ongoing barriers to reporting, prevention, and culture change (as outlined below).

Principle Three: Transparency

The third key principle in addressing sexual violence in higher education is transparency. Transparency works against the silence and secrecy that perpetrators, harassers and institutions may expect or demand. For example, perpetrators may insist that their behaviour is normal or has been misconstrued, or alternatively (and sometimes concurrently) may threaten

survivors with retaliation if they do speak up. Such threats of retaliation mirror uncomfortably the tactics that can be used by higher education institutions in silencing students who attempt to make complaints.[10] While during investigations within institutions there are stages where confidentiality is necessary to ensure due process, the wider confidentiality processes used by universities in cases of sexual misconduct work to isolate and silence complainants – whether staff or students. Prioritising transparency, while balancing legal requirements around the right to privacy and data protection, would allow trust to build in the institution's disciplinary and investigative processes and its commitment to upholding expected standards of behaviour and professional ethics.

Transparency should also be a principle that informs policy mechanisms and approaches. The key way in which this can take place is through data gathering. Currently, HE institutions have no duty to report any data relating to sexual violence, although the Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) does report on data on complaints to the Office for Students. However, as The 1752 Group have demonstrated in their report Silencing Students , there are significant barriers to students making formal complaints to the OIAHE due to the time and effort required to engage with internal institutional complaints processes. This means that current OIAHE data is highly misleading in understanding this issue. Despite the recommendation in Universities UK's 2016 report Changing the Culture that HE institutions should gather data on numbers of complaints and the outcomes of complaints, it appears that little progress has been made towards this goal.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency should therefore gather and publish annual data on the number of formal complaints against staff and students within each institution, and the outcomes of these complaints (aggregated for anonymity). The climate is shifting towards seeing very low numbers of complaints as evidence of institutional failure, rather than high numbers, therefore institutions with very low numbers of reports will be subject to critical scrutiny. The rest of the UK should also follow Scotland's groundbreaking work, whereby the Equally Safe in Higher Education toolkit provides institutions with a climate survey that they can use to gather regular data. Transparency is also needed around complaints that have been upheld in order to mitigate against staff perpetrators moving between institutions, which they can currently do with impunity. Advance HE, as the body that oversees teaching in higher education, could be an appropriate institution to monitor those who are fit to teach in UK HE.

Principle Four: Accountability

A fourth principle that should underpin institutional and policy approaches to sexual violence in HE is accountability, where a key priority is the accountability of institutions. In relation to the dynamics of abuse, this refers to the absence or presence of a community that holds people accountable for their actions – whether this community is a family, an institution, or a society. On the level of an institutional approach to addressing sexual violence, this means developing explicit and clear standards of behavior and holding people accountable when they violate these standards. Higher education institutions generally lack both a clear set of standards of behaviour in relation to professional boundaries, and robust systems for holding members of their communities accountable. While formal mechanisms exist for holding perpetrators accountable, there is evidence that internal institutional complaints processes can be ineffectual as well as traumatising for complainants.[12] While a few institutions are making progressive change in this area, there is further work to be done to agree sector-wide standards that adequately address the experiences of students who make complaints of SV to HE institutions. In addition, high levels of gender inequality at senior levels can contribute to the failure to challenge inappropriate behaviours among staff. This accountability at the level of the institution must be visible to other members of the community, for example by making public the outcomes of complaints where possible in order to increase trust in those considering reporting. In addition, accountability through professional ethics should take place at the level of professional or disciplinary associations and funding bodies.

Accountability also needs to take place at a supra-institutional level, and this is where it becomes a principle for national policy. This level of accountability encompasses institutions' alignment with legal frameworks and also with professional ethical standards within particular disciplines. There is evidence that institutions are not upholding their legal obligations under the Equality Act, and there is an urgent need to clarify a shared understanding of institutions' legal 'duty of care' towards students. Existing infrastructure for oversight therefore needs to be strengthened. Currently, if survivors who make a formal complaint are failed by their institution the only effective mechanism for redress is taking independent legal action against their institution. The high costs of this route – both financial and personal - mean that it is unavailable to most, leading to students and staff leaving their jobs, careers or degrees. The Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) is supposed to provide such redress, but in

reality has very limited powers. Therefore, the OIA should be strengthened to enable it to require HE institutions to demonstrate they are upholding current legal frameworks in their policies and practice. In addition, legal aid to support students who need to take legal action against their institutions urgently needs to be put in place. Primary legislation is also needed, as recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission[12] to extend the time limit for sexual harassment cases being taken to tribunal.

Principle Five: Empowerment

The final principle is empowerment, which should underpin institutional work on prevention and support for survivors. Central to this is developing partnerships with local specialist sexual violence organisations who can provide expertise, including counselling, outreach and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors. In supporting survivors, this model of empowerment is different to 'postfeminist' ideals of empowerment, as it recognises the destructive impacts of sexual violence, and also acknowledges the strength of women who keep living through these destructive impacts. Universities need to provide control and choice for survivors who come forward. Engaging choice at every stage of disclosure and reporting for survivors is crucial, as this facilitates someone connecting to and accessing their own sense of power and control, which has been taken away from them through the experience of sexual violence or harassment. This model also requires support for survivors through long-term, funded partnerships with local specialist sexual violence organisations, and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors that partner with HE institutions, yet are located within RCCs to maintain independence. Too often, sexual violence organisations' work with HE institutions has to draw from their existing budgets, despite their precarious and inadequate funding. Instead, funding arrangements must properly recognise and resource the expertise that specialist front-line organisations bring to this work.

Conclusion: momentum for change?

These five principles are designed to foreground the experience of the survivor/complainant, and to orient institutional and sector-wide change. Through **belief** in the survivor, trust in institutions will be built and due process will become more possible. By increasing the **visibility** of sexual violence within institutions and across the sector, the reality that HE institutions are full of SV survivors will be revealed and this will mean that students and staff will be more likely to speak up about their experiences.

Such a climate of openness will also be achieved by gathering and making public data on this issue in order to more towards greater **transparency**. Through strengthening mechanisms for **accountability** and clarifying and upholding institutions' legal obligations, there will be a clear message towards anyone perpetrating sexual violence that it is unacceptable, which will help to create a wider culture where sexual violence is not tolerated. And finally, by organising support and accountability mechanisms around the principle of **empowerment** for survivors by providing control and choice at every step of the way, institutions will become safer and more just places for everyone.

Implementing these principles for a survivor-centred approach to higher education requires ongoing transformation of relationships of power within higher education and sector reform. These conversations and changes are already underway but they are not happening evenly across the sector, nor are they are sufficiently embedded in existing policy and governance mechanisms. Nevertheless, momentum for change has been building, and as a result, the current moment presents a powerful opportunity to enact and embed positive transformation to address sexual violence within higher education, and to draw on survivors' voices to make HE a place where social change can happen ■

Conclusion

Sol Gamsu and Faiza Shaheen

These chapters in this anthology of critical policy writing about further and higher education aim to shift the way education workers, students and the general public think about the politics of education. We need to move away from a defensive politics and towards the transformative ideas and policies which will help us build the system of colleges, universities and schools that we all want. It is not enough to simply turn the clock back to education before the austerity agenda of 2010, or the neoliberal policies of the 1990s and the 2000s.

The aims and ideas that we highlight are broader and deeper than that. It is up to us to apply the political imagination that allows us to transition to a system which is not riven by inequalities, hierarchy and market relations. We are not just interested in abolishing market models of fees, debts and competition but in dismantling the older deeper hierarchies of race, gender, able-ism and class that pre-date neoliberal models of further and higher education.

The papers in this collection have examined the following themes:

1. De-marketisation: A market in HE is neither workable nor desirable. Debt, and the student loans and tuition fees that create it, do nothing for students or the education workers. Instead we propose co-operative models of education that allow for collaborative forms of knowledge creation, where learning ceases to be a commodity or a badge of prestige but instead becomes a collective endeavour. We should change and dismantle performance management metrics because how these are used in research and teaching is essential to the democratisation of further and higher education. These changes should also cascade down, and form part of, changes across schools, nurseries and community learning. In order to build a National Education Service new principles are needed – and these principles will not revert to post-war social democratic educational ideals but must seek to build something new.

2. Refocusing on community and social value: education must be judged differently – we need to think about the collective value of teaching and of research to communities, local, national and global. The production of cultures of elitism and prestige amongst universities and researchers do little for people in universities or the local communities in which they are located. We need closer and *meaningful* democratic links between local communities and universities. The agenda laid out in this anthology seeks to tie together arguments for rejuvenating local government and economies and for re-thinking democracy and the entire culture of universities and colleges.

3. Opening up the doors: Given the changing nature of work it is crucial that our post-16 education system is able to cater for adult learners, including those who can only study part time. Making education open means re-prioritising access, *especially* for adult learners. The ultimate future of further and higher education will be open access so that the door between education, work and learning for collective flourishing is much more open. The policies outlined here provide the lines of a transition to such a system.

4. Flattening further education and university hierarchies: Dismantling the class hierarchy through the academic vs non-academic split requires a revaluing of education and curricula. Grant funding for research would allow a democratisation of research and allow us to move beyond traditional divisions between 'research-intensive' and 'teaching-focussed' universities. There is no reason why research culture and funding should remain the preserve of universities alone – in time this too must be re-thought and re-structured.

5. Building in equality: Equality cannot be an afterthought, otherwise you get a system - as we have right now - that is heavily segregated along the lines of gender, class, geography and ethnicity, and which dismisses or overlooks the needs of disabled staff and students. Hierarchies amongst staff or between staff and students must not allow the forms of sexual harassment, abuse and bullying which has become embedded in our colleges and universities. Equality must be the goal, and our education system has to live the aim. Education must operate along the lines of principles and values that we seek to teach. It must be as the critical educators Paulo Freire and bell hooks wrote, the practice of freedom. No one can be excluded in this model – not on lines of academic 'ability' or through the exclusionary content or practices of how we teach and learn. It is time for us to write the principles and models that should underpin our education.

What we outline here is only the beginning of a longer political discussion about education. There are many other voices of education workers and students alike whose ideas we

need to draw on. It is time to write and create the space for a new politics of education. We hope this is the beginning of a flourishing of a new left politics of education. In the 1920s and the 1930s, universities, local authorities and adult education providers, like the Central Labour Colleges and the Workers Education Association worked together to provide working-class education in deprived small towns and rural areas.[1] This was a collective and political movement which saw education as a tool for building solidarity, cooperation and change. If we are going to overcome the social, cultural and environmental crises that we face, we need to think about education a tool for hegemony. It is a way to shape how people think and what we collectively value. The Conservatives know this, how else can you explain the cuts to adult and further education and the decision to give the current generation of students' massive debts?

We have suffered nearly a decade of cuts, twenty to thirty years of marketisation on a system of education which was already hierarchical and unequal. The policies that led to these models were not built on principles of equality, cooperation or socialism. Education is a political battleground and we need to think about how we create and communicate the ideas which will allow us to build the society we want. The responsibility for building this project falls on all of us, from university administrators to college lecturers, from part-time university students to professors – we all have an equal stake in how education is organised and what education means. We should have no fear in stating what we want, the transition and the road may be long, but we must build the education that will allow us to create another world. There is no other option ■

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