

The Role of Higher Education in Supporting Intercultural Harmony: A Framework and a Survey

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Abstract

According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the mission of Higher Education (HE) is “to educate, to train, and to undertake research.” HE therefore results in the development of both: human resources, and knowledge; and this leads to job creation and wealth generation. An essential pre-requisite to such development is peace and security. In this respect, Intercultural Harmony (IH) is an important issue that requires special attention. This paper advocates the need for IH to be part of the mission of HE. It presents a framework that identifies IH as an intermediate knowledge layer between diversified human cultures on the one hand, and global understanding and cooperation on the other. It develops a questionnaire on the needed support to this layer in order to collect expert views on the matter from HE leaders. The questionnaire explores: responsibility for IH; HE contributions to intercultural knowledge; HE practices concerned with enhancing IH; and other HE support to IH. HE leaders attending the 8th QS conference of 2012 have answered the questionnaire; and their answers and comments are presented and discussed here. The paper hopes to initiate a momentum in HE toward contributing to IH, and enhancing world peace.

Keyword: Higher Education; Cultural Diversity; Intercultural Harmony; World Peace; Development

Manuscript received: 2013.1.23; Revised: 2013.5.8; Accepted: 2013.5.9

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