

# LACKING STATUS, TRADITION AND PRESTIGE



WHAT MAKES PHE'S ATTRACTIVE?

# Private education grows worldwide

- Private education is still growing strong – in underdeveloped countries as well as the highly industrialized world.
- In upcoming economies it is even booming.
- According to James Tooley, professor of education policy at the University of Newcastle, the private sector has moved to account for one fourth of global higher education enrollment.
- With the demand for higher education ever-growing and unmet internationally, the private sector continues to grow.

# Private education grows in Europe

- Findings of a research group, alongside an ISO working group, producing an ISO norm for private Learning Service Providers (LSP's), shows a widespread network of LSP's with peaks in France and the UK and it is strongly growing in Poland, Russia and Bulgaria.
- According to the OESO Factbook, the spending (by individuals and companies) in the USA are € 93.0 billion while France, Germany and the UK alone account for € 109,1 billion (not all of them are spend in the Higher Education Area).
- Big numbers pointing to a huge potential of learners;
- Private LSP's are of enormous importance for the economy

# Private education grows in the Netherlands [CBS]

- In the Netherlands the tradition of PHEI's is very weak.
- That being said, spending on private education has nearly doubled in the course of a decade.
- In 2006, spending on private education amounted to nearly 1.1 billion euro, as against 561 million euro in 1996.
- The number of participants have increased: in 2006, over 183 thousand people attended some form of private education.

# Scope [CBS]

- Private education is supposed to:
  - Lead to a widely recognized certificate and not just to train skills (e.g. driving lessons);
  - Be relevant for the labour market (no hobby courses);
  - Require 400 hours of study or more and last at least six months;
  - In-house company courses are excluded.
  - Training courses organized by the police and the Ministry of Defense are included in private education.
  - International schools are outside the private education sector.

# Costs [CBS]

- The average costs of private education amount to 5,900 euro and do not differ much from subsidized education.
- With an average of 1,750 euro per student, distance learning (written courses, e-learning) is by far the least costly form of private education.
- With an average of 7,500 euro, full-time private education is much more expensive due to frequent face-to-face contact with teachers and coaches.
- Participants account for two thirds of the total costs of private education, employees for one third.

# Characteristics of participants

[CBS]

- Most participants intend to improve their position on the labour market.
- In some cases, private education is the only way to obtain a certificate.
- Parents /sponsors with an entrepreneurial background
- Having accomplished initial education and wanting to specialize

# Characterization of PHE's

- The private sector is very diverse: small enterprises (some 20 students) up to supranational organizations (more than 95.000 students)
- Success is measured by retention of students, degree completion, as well as job placement and employer satisfaction with graduates' performance.
- Quality is defined by PHEI's as fitness for purpose and first of all meeting the standards of the ordering customer.
- PHEI's frequently engage in partnerships with other PHEI's and/or public providers.

# the customer is always right

- PHEI's are attractive especially for adult learners and post initial students.
- It is not status, tradition or prestige which counts for it (although tradition is a matter of time and prestige comes with success), but adjustment to the demands of the market (employers and employees).

**No wonder public providers are interested in the key factors which count for it.**

# Why attractive

## Directly

- ❑ Private education is fit for purpose, rewarded and wanted by many employers / employees
- ❑ The design of PHEI's programs is driven by employers' needs and students' interests as well as their personal situation (accelerated programs, flexible schedules and modular course structure)
- ❑ It is career-oriented, hands-on and customer-focused
- ❑ Their primary purpose is to prepare graduates for jobs or career advancement
- ❑ The use of the learning is in the immediate present

# Why attractive?

Indirectly: PHEI's fill in the gap.

- ❑ Public institutions do not meet the raising demand for (higher) education – worldwide
- ❑ No way our government can meet the Lisbon targets (50% of the employees 25 – 44 yrs. is higher educated) without use of the private educational infrastructure.
- ❑ They do not meet the demand for skills in a global economy – in IT and business
- ❑ They do not keep up with the pace of working people 's lifestyle and/or the lifestyle of the not-average student.

# The Title: assumptions?

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1. Status, tradition and prestige are characteristics of public education
2. the quality of private education is not transparent enough
3. the profit motive is not compatible with academic values

# Assumptions: true and false

## False-

- Some of the worlds most prestigious institutes are private (Harvard; MIT; INSEAD)
- Within branches (private/specific) certificates often counts more than (public/general) diploma's.
- An increasing number of public HEI's are in business

## True –

Quality assurance of PHEI's is not internationally standardized with exception of those programmes which meet the accreditation formats.

# Accreditation of PHEI's / experiences

- To meet the abstract standards of the accreditation framework placed extra strain on private providers due to a change in perspective. The accreditation organization became (a sort of) new stakeholder whose demands had to be met. This took some time.
- The accreditation framework is sufficiently wide to cover differences between (private or public)
- At least there are mixed experiences with the composition of panels: Obstacle was/is the dominant orientation on initial public funded education (17-23 yrs.): panels had/have to be convinced that different modalities and approaches can lead to comparable sufficient quality
- It is a quite costly affair in business where time is money

# Accreditation of PHEI's /results

- Many providers had to load and/or enlarge their programmes to meet the Dublin descriptors of bachelor/master level
- Some institutions were just too small to engage in accreditation; it seemed that providers had to be of a certain size to meet the break-even point.
- As a tool to compare private and public funded education it is a success – for the part which aims at degree-programmes
- The biggest challenge was in most cases to stay flexible and demand-driven while accommodating the accrediting format

# Limitations of accreditation

- Accreditation is limited to HEI's with degree awarding power for bachelor, master and doctorate. Degrees however do not meet all the needs of either the stakeholders or the LSP's, especially not in the field of Life Long Learning.
- Accreditation is a mould that does not always fit the shape of the private Learning Services. Branch certificates and other quality marks are much more suited for these providers / programmes.
- Nevertheless in sight of the challenges ahead and according to the EU targets, a congruent approach of quality issues regarding formal and non-formal education would be welcomed.

# Other quality assurance efforts

*of a different kind*

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Besides accreditation:

- Branch activities
- ISO initiative

# Branch efforts on quality issues

- **Code of conduct** (branch)
  - about being a reliable and trustworthy partner in providing learning services
- **Bi-partite delivery conditions**
  - edited by LSP's and consumers organization
- **Alternative (external) dispute resolution**
  - Binding for members

# ISO 13146 (coming soon)

- The objective of this standard is to provide a common reference for learning service providers and their clients in the design, development and delivery of non-formal education, training and development.
- It covers:
  - Learning Programs and Processes
  - LSP management

# Concluding remarks

- Accreditation is a rewarded method for a small part of PHEI's (degree awarding institutes)
- To meet the demands of higher education in business and industry private institutions and branch certificates have an advantage over public institutions
- Up to now these educational pathways (formal and non-formal learning) stand complete ignorant towards each other
- This gap should be bridged in order to get Europe, and the Lisbon targets, on track
- With help of the EQF it is possible

# Take away

- Our minister asks (after 'Leuven' last month) for a multi-dimensional classification of European universities;
  - why not a multi-dimensional characterization of (higher) education – this is to say accreditation according to european standards and certification according to branches or accepted by relevant stakeholders?

**Thank you for your attention**