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EDUCATION SECTOR STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

THANK YOU

We are grateful for your insightful knowledge, experience and projection towards this research. This supports ongoing research and development of emerging education practice for enabling learners to be future ready and be the change they want to see in the world.

BACKGROUND

INNOCO works at a community level to explore and encourage homegrown social innovation ideas and action, through a versatile and impactful program. It aims to assist participants to become social changemakers and cultivate a pathway for social action and community building. The program is structured in threefold SELF + SOCIETY + SERVICE based on the core value of **ME=WE** transformative relationships enabling CONNECTION + COLLABORATION + CONTRIBUTION. Please visit www.innoco.co for further information.

This initiative was co-created in 2015 by Yunsun Chung and Joanne Renaux in Dubai, UAE. Part of the research and development was funded by Zayed University, Dubai between 2017-2019.

PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWS

In order to create a sustainable practice of changemaker education, INNOCO joined the MIT u.lab 2x (www.presencing.com) cohort in January 2021. We formed an extended team of 9 members from Australia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, UAE, USA and Canada. The program was an accelerator to advance UN Sustainable Development Goals initiatives in local settings. Our team focus was EDUCATION and the *Stakeholder Interviews* was to understand comprehensively the current situation of education from multiple perspectives on a global scale.

INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

Overall Analysis - 1- 8													
Respondents/Countries	Nepal	U.A.E.	India	Pakistan	U.S.A.	Egypt	U.K.	Italy	Canada	Aus'lia	Bahrain	Korea	Total
Kids and Junior Youth	1	9	1	2					2	1	2		18
Youth (13 - 18 Years)		6	1	1									8
Youth Wrks and Service Prvdrs		6											6
Parents, Grandparents, Caregivers	1	4			2		1						8
Educators and Faculty			6		1			1					8
Mgt. Policy Makers, Funders			5	1									6
Content Creators	2	1				1							4
Faith Leaders		1			1								2
Community Builders		3		1					1			1	6
Totals	**4**	**30**	**13**	**5**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**66**

OUTCOME OF INTERVIEWS

The following analysis and summary will help in the formulation of an intervention at a grassroot level that still needs to be prototyped. Updates will be provided on www.innoco.co

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The questions were modelled to enhance clarity on what matters from the viewpoints of all stakeholders in the education system, identify gaps and barriers, assess the potential value in creating an intervention, and begin to build a relationship. The summary is divided into five sections: **1) What is the current situation? 2) What wants to die? 3) What wants to emerge? 4) What are the barriers? 5) What might enable progress?**

1. WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION IN EDUCATION (from a global perspective)?

The positives which were highlighted:

a. **School as an Opportunity:** This is a foundational system in building society. There is greater accessibility and choices to all levels of education. The basic degrees are affordable to many. Much knowledge and information is accessible. Internet connection enables access to online courses and training. There are more opportunities in terms of a variety of career options to choose from in preparing for careers and new work pathways.

b. **Increasing Awareness:** There are efforts to build and address social justice issues around common moral and spiritual principles and beliefs within transdisciplinary settings of curriculum.

c. **Different Countries; Different Scenarios:** There is an awakening to the urgency of education reform on a local and global scale. In different countries the education system is straddling at different points on the spectrum. These include: traditional rote learning; evolving methods of teaching but less individualised learning opportunities; and much evolved student centered curricula but lack of assessment flexibility and gaps like lack of communication among all constituencies.

The major number of comments focussed on the negatives:

a. **Outdated**: Overall curricula is more theory based rather than explorative and skill based. It lacks a focus on application and research. It lacks academic rigour. The emphasis is on degrees and scores. It is not student centred nor is it fun. It is not holistic. It is a system which helped create a subservient class to serve the administrative interests of colonisation. It is elitist. Students of lower economic standing cannot access it. It is not aligned with 21st century needs.[1] Education does not address the challenges faced by the youth. Too much

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[1]

https://medium.com/presencing-institute-blog/vertical-literacy-12-principles-for-reinventing-the-21st-century-university-39c2948192ee

importance has been "given to documentation with regards to getting a grading / ranking from accrediting/regulatory bodies"[2].

b. **Response to Online Learning:** due to the pandemic, teaching and learning done solely through online learning was a strain and the effectiveness is questionable. Individual attention lacked in the virtual space and sensory engagement caused withdrawal or shorter attention spans. Most students wanted more face to face time with teachers and peers.

c. **Affordability and Accessibility:** Government subsidized institutions are now in short supply and higher education is getting more and more privatized. "It operates more as a business than as a site for learning and community enrichment". "Higher education has been oversold and overpriced." The unprivileged face serious challenges to access higher education because of affordability and lack of internet in rural areas. It is underfunded and overregulated. Freedom of expression of one's thoughts and ideas different from the mainstream is not always encouraged.

d. **Spiritual:** The spiritual nature and potentiality of humanity and the human endeavours have never been fully recognized in the academic/educational field. There's very little attention given to human spirituality[3] and connection with nature. There is a need to build a new knowledge base through spiritual principles; how to inspire the community members to draw forth excellence from within, to bring about a genuine change to the 'world surrounding'.

e. **Community:** The ties which make students, teachers and education staff a community are very weak on a whole. There is a lack of integration of community learning, participation and partnership.

f. **Misuse of Technology:** Tech and tools are disconnected from morality in the choice of their use. Examples: cyber bullying between students, creating a virtual self which the world wants to see separate from one's real self and so on that could lead to psychological trauma, anxiousness and depression. There's lots of contradictory information and very few criteria by which to judge its usefulness and accuracy.

2. WHAT IS WANTING TO DIE (does not hold relevance or value)?

a. **Traditional System of Education:** The traditional system of education with its traditional classrooms, teacher focussed, assessment targets, and obsolete assessment methods which encourage rote learning and the administrative tasks arising therefrom. Most definitely the

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[2] All quotations are extracted from the participants' comments
[3] https://www.ottoscharmer.com/sites/default/files/2003_TheBlindSpot.pdf (check again)

patriarchal, top-down system, paternalistic, authority driving and didactic mindsets.

b. **Non–Conducive Environment & Silo-Based Systems:** The focus on narrow skills sets which are rapidly becoming obsolete. Exclusive focus on career and employment. An environment which is not conducive to capacity building, creative thinking and innovation. Which is not student centred where students choose subjects of interest. Which lacks relevant collaboration and teaching staff with agile and adaptive approaches to teaching. With the vast opportunities and resources for becoming self- educated outside a traditional university setting, the college majors centering on the liberal arts are less needed.

c. **De-motivators & Injustice:** Checklist boxes, half-hearted staff due to management crisis, "oppression of mediocrity" need to be removed. Inequality of…., Intolerance for…., Injustice towards…., dishonesty amongst….., need to be reduced/removed.

d. **Government Regulation:** Overriding Government regulation needs to be minimised.

3. WHAT IS WANTING TO EMERGE (needs and relevance to a rapidly changing world)?

a. **Universal Principles:** Love, care, respect, equality, common language of understanding, individual investigation of truth, universal legislature and so on are entering the vocabulary of more and more people towards sustainability and circular (economy) systems.

b. **Holistic Education:** The person is the center of education one heart at a time. Interconnectedness among people, nature and the universe needs to be emphasised. Highly connected and collaborated with diverse ethnicities, cultures, faith traditions. Integrity and ethical behaviour are supported. Building a new knowledge base based on spiritual principles. Education is a way of enhancing and empowering all humanity for creating a sustainable and harmonious future by serving others.

c. **New Modes of Learning:** Embracing new ways of learning and doing, such as: experiential; active and interactive learning; student led and inclusive learning; art-based; creative confidence integration; collaborative and participatory learning; blended learning; networking among peers; flipped classrooms; shared leadership; intercultural learnings and 'diversity education'; hands-on and practical; analytical and gamified in physical and digital format. All these different forms of learning need to surface. Fun-based education needs to be encouraged.

d. **Life Skills and Capacity Building:** Strong focus on life skill learnings; focus on capacity building which can be helpful in students' future growth; more emphasis on skills, slightly less dependence on university based certificates (paper degrees). Continuous upgrading and on-going training. Self-directed ongoing lifetime learning. Focus on mental health, leadership, service and innovation.

e. **Going Beyond Syllabi and Classroom Walls:** Going beyond syllabi; liberal arts; entrepreneurship; social impact and sustainability; the increasing demand for apprenticeships; meeting the rapid changes and expectations of industry and business; and more alternative points of entry into career fields to be enabled. Emergence of innovation platforms and curation of tools to develop skills and knowledge. Design curricula that meet the needs of the future economy.

f. **Technology as an Enhancer:** Technology as applied to education viz. Artificial Intelligence, IoT, AR & VR, big data analytics, online teaching, changing evaluation tools, use of social media, digital responsibility, Data authentication and application. Technology needs to be used to enhance life and the community.

g. **Teacher Training & Support:** Extensive, affordable, resourceful, collaborative, supportive teacher training in transition to virtual/hybrid learning spaces. Flexibility in teaching styles. Reimagine roles and responsibilities of teachers/facilitators/mentors/coaches.

h. **Accessibility and Inclusion:** More opportunities from a community level are presenting themselves for accessibility and affordability of education for underprivileged, special learning and persons with disability.

4. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS (areas blocking change and movement)?

a. **In Consciousness and Mindsets**
   → **Lack of Acknowledgement of Material and Spiritual Integrative Aspects** of human development. There are restrictions on exploring spiritual reality in the educational system. **Lack of empathy** towards the challenges faced by all and new generations.

   → **Lack of Understanding or Imagination** that getting an education and accessing opportunities are about more than building a materially better life alone. Students are being educated to be part of a productive workforce, not happy and fulfilled citizens hence inertia poor motivation and clarity. Rarely provided role-models, authentic guidance and leadership.

   → **Lack of Vision and Unity in** institutions at systems-level. No unity along siloed developments regarding the direction and philosophy of education. Lots of skepticism. Isolated and disconnected stakeholders yet competing and mistrusting one another. It is urgent for interventionists to realize that all stakeholders need to be radical collaborators in the co-design process of design solutions and implementation.

   → **Public attitudes** that devalue education in general and higher education in various countries.

b. **In Understanding of Young Generation**

   → **Stereotype Attitude of Youth:** Teamwork is hard. Lack of exposure to the professional world. Youth can be strongly opinionated: they need to be trained to take constructive

criticism and work with different mindsets. Lack of real life engagement. Blindly following materialism, consumption oriented social construct.

→ **Information overload:** Sifting through the massive amount of information and resources available and sharing what is more relevant and helpful for participants. **Social and economic hurdles:** Social, and economic hurdles eg. girls' education still takes a backseat. Systemic racism.

→ **Too Many Distractions in Online Learning:** Challenge of keeping participants engaged as there are so many distractions at home - especially social media.

c. **In Quality of Education**

→ **Lack of Available Leaders and Qualified Teachers:** constantly upgrade themselves producing updated syllabi, pedagogy, assessment and keeping abreast of progress in industry. Lack of ability to adapt to present day technology and implement it in the teaching learning process. Irresponsible contentment with the current curriculum which does not prepare students for the Industry and without forward thinking vision for future education. Difficult to motivate teachers to go beyond the necessary minimum.

→ **Imbalanced Curriculum:** Lack of morality and ethics. Corruption and favoritism are serious issues. Lack of relevant and helpful information/ resources for participants. Lack of experiential learning / trust in new systems emerging. Lack of sustainability in education reform efforts. Lack of research; not enough data is available. Legacy measures are used to record progress.

→ **Lack of preparedness** for the Industry. **No consideration for future needs:** No consideration given to new generations and the issues they are facing.

d. **In Administrative Systems**
→ **Lack of Systemic Solutions** due to fear-based and bureaucratic structures for social and economic injustice such as girls' education, systemic racism, inequality, etc. The whole system has been disrupted with ineffective solutions. Administration at times is rigid and rigidity takes an institution nowhere. There's no will to act and lots of apathy**.**

→ **Inflexibility:** Because of the rigid education system it is not agile to move and change to current research and data. Therefore, a lot of decisions are based on outdated and 'old' mind-sets causing friction.

→ **Disunity and Politics**: Institutions struggle to have a holistic and unified vision. Lack of unity between different institutions for the vision, philosophy, and pedagogies. Politics is probably the number one challenge - people who play politics want to keep their positions, please their egos and only think of themselves and not the wellbeing of others.

→ **Commercialisation of Education.** A drive for short-term gain, profit over service. Availability of good higher education at affordable cost for poor and lower middle class. Government's withdrawal from funding higher education. No conducive seeking-truth education environment. No proper management of the high demands for practical/interactive teaching/learning.

→ **Government Interference:** Too many compliances and government mandates. Lack of transparency. A tight control over the form and content of education. Government's withdrawal from funding higher education and its attempt to control and homogenize content. The frequent changes in government policies with respect to higher education.

→ **Very High Standards, Autonomy, Funding:** Exceptionally high eligibility standards (academic and financial) for professional education. Lack of autonomy to choose syllabus and assessment pattern. Policies and funding are an obstacle.

→ **Financial Constraints:** Financial constraints especially in the light of the ongoing pandemic. The pandemic and the restrictions it has caused.

5. WHAT WOULD ENABLE PROGRESS (points to consider for an intervention)?

a. **A Common Vision:** Inclusive approaches for all stakeholders towards developing a common vision which is world-embracing; what the collectives want and need to achieve while contributing to a destined path of oneness of humanity. To create life-long learners and build the communal capacity to interact locally and globally.

b. **New Perspectives of Teaching as Facilitation**: **Integrating humanities and ethics into the curriculum:** More skills based higher learning rather focusing on self discovery and self-transformation while learning relationship between ME=WE and being independent and interdependent learners. Awareness of crisis, awareness of hope, awareness of divine matrix. Efforts at self-transformation

c. **Building Learner/Facilitator Capacities:**

→ **Social, Environment, Spiritual Awareness:** Raising social awareness economically, politically, and culturally through increased social responsibility, moral/virtue education, and integration of ethical responsibilities. Strong foundation for coexistence and sustainability.

→ **Resiliency:** Emotional development programmes for students & parents; increased social responsibility; high priorities on moral, virtues, and ethical responsibilities; Awareness of crisis, awareness of hope, awareness of divine matrix;

→ **Technology:** More accessibility, proper use, innovative applications for assisting learners' pathways and managing multi-faceted interactions among stakeholders.

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→ **Research and Innovation:** Research based assignments. Encouraging innovation and research among teachers. Upgradation of skills. Faculty orientation and training. Encourage entrepreneurship.

d. **New Relationship Building with Industry and Community:** Greater engagement between students, faculty and alumni to leverage collective knowledge, skills, networks and experiences. Building consulted and integrated curriculum which offers multicultural learning is not limited to western-influenced learning. Integrating humanities and ethics in the curriculum of engineering.

e. **Service Outreach:** Redefining the Purpose of education as for service to society and refocus on service to others, and increasing service opportunity in curriculums. Building the students' voice. Emotional development programmes for students & parents.

f. **Peer Learning and Industry Relevant Curriculum:** Get the students to be independent and interdependent learners. Get rid of the idolatry of marks and tyranny of exams. Encourage students to move towards skills based higher learning. Setting the curriculum in consultation with the industry. Encourage entrepreneurship. Multicultural learning is not limited to western-influenced learning.

g. **Online/Alternative modes of learning:** Embracing opportunities of democratization of education through virtual learning and increasing capacities to enable online and alternative modes of teaching and learning.

h. **Government Funding:** Increased government funding for education. Education should be one of the main concerns of the country, which should be reflected in how much finance is devoted to it. Provide financial backing including public funding and alumni commitment.

i. **Autonomy et al:** One Board, Robust Learning Model, Private-Public Partnership. The choice of being autonomous.