The Eighth Biannual Gulf Comparative Education Society Symposium

Public, Private, or Philanthropic: Exploring the Impact of New Actors on Education in the GCC

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GIVING BACK: ALUMNI AS ASSETS FOR GENERATING PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN BAHRAIN

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## INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

### Challenges for HEIs in Bahrain

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Global Financial Crisis</th>
<th>Shift in Economy from Natural Resources</th>
<th>Increase in Number of Students Entering Higher Education</th>
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INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Need for new financial support

Expected to be a growing need

Possible source of support: alumni philanthropic initiatives
INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Alumni Philanthropic Activities Generally Result from Private Foundations
(e.g. single individual, family, or corporation)

Operating Foundations
(Run Programs, Provide Services, Conduct Direct Charitable Activities, Involved in own Projects)

Non-Operating Foundations
(Make grants & Do Not Focus on Running Their Own Programs)
INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Control

- Independent legal entity controlled exclusively by own donors
- Has the final say in how its assets are invested and spent

Flexibility

- Can provoke change in many ways (making grants, awarding scholarships, giving funds directly, making program-related investments, or running own charitable programs)

Advantages of a Private Foundation
INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Regardless of whether the alumni support will be originating from non-operating or from operating foundations, the question is this:

- Are HEIs in Bahrain operating in ways that would help them in creating philanthropic cultures that would result in committed and enduring philanthropic alumni?

- And if not, what is needed on the part of the HEIs themselves and what forms of alumni philanthropy would be most effective in the Bahraini context?
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

13 HEIs in Bahrain
- 12 of which undergo BQA program & institutional reviews
- Part of the BQA reviews focuses on: graduates & their standards, employability, work destinations, & satisfaction toward HEI experience
- Results of these reviews are published reports recording evidence-based findings and conclusions

13 HEIs in Bahrain
- 2 of which are public & are funded by the government; have the largest student intake
- Remaining are private; suffer from shortage of students

Noticeable cuts in resources & services
- Symbolic Student Fees
- Considerably High Student Fees

Need for New Sources of Financial Support
- Negatively impacts student intake
- Noticeably High Student Fees
- Cuts in resources & services negatively impact student intake
- Symbolic Student Fees

13 HEIs in Bahrain
- 2 of which are public & are funded by the government; have the largest student intake
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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The assumption that the relationship between philanthropy & education is complex

The belief that philanthropy works best when it supports those best placed to innovate in their communities rather than when it tries to set the agenda

The view that venture or high-engagement philanthropy through money, knowledge, expertise & connections is effective in bringing success
METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Approach

- Analysis of Literature Review Results
- Analysis of Field Experiences with HEIs in Bahrain
- Analysis of BQA Reports
### RESEARCH FINDINGS

**Literature Review**

**Findings**

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**3 main elements needed for the creation of philanthropic cultures**

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<tr>
<th>Appreciation</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Agency</th>
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| ✓-Enhanced quality of education offered by HEIs  
✓-Appreciative graduates  
✓-Value of education exceeded the price of tuition | -Outreach initiatives/programs  
-Communication, relationships, and even partnerships with alumni  
-Opportunities to continue learning | -Programs/initiatives that help in creating a better world or in making a difference or a powerful impact in the community  
-Alumni feel they are giving through their HEI to create a better world |

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RESEARCH FINDINGS

BQA Review Reports & Field Experiences

APPRECIATION

Some concern about the ability of HEIs’ programs to graduate individuals who possess the expected knowledge, skills & competencies

Lack of formal scientific mechanisms used to conduct labor market research through which their programs could be kept current and relevant

Lack of agility of such programs and their lack of ability to adapt to market needs
RESEARCH FINDING

BQA Review Reports & Field Experiences

AFFILIATION

- HEIs rarely approach their alumni and usually do so only superficially
- HEIs do not systematically nor effectively follow up with their alumni
- Only have sketchy and scattered information about them and their employment destinations
- HEIs fail to build on the good relations some of their alumni have with individual faculty
RESEARCH FINDINGS

BQA Review Reports & Field Experiences

AGENCY

Some attempts to establish initiatives & programmes that are customized to add real value to the community

These attempts usually fail to pass their initial stage of development

These attempts do not materialize mainly due to intermittent funding

These attempts end in inadequacies in terms of their contribution
In Bahrain, the results of this study show that HEIs are still falling short from fostering the three ingredients of appreciation and affiliation. This clearly reduces the chances of alumni’s philanthropic spirit being boosted.
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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<tr>
<td>HEIs in Bahrain should maintain better links with their graduates by reaching out to them and developing formal alumni associations where alumni can meet regularly and have fruitful conversations with their HEIs</td>
<td>Would help establish alumni’s sense of belongingness and have them as advocates for those HEIs</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEIs need to keep detailed information about their graduates such as their employability rates and first and current destinations</td>
<td>HEIs will be able to benefit in more effective ways and to gain different forms of support, where possible, for their specific needs through the success of their graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEIs need to formally scope the labor market and make program revisions accordingly</td>
<td>Programs on offer and their outcomes will better meet the labor market needs and provide graduates with skills and knowledge needed to better their life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEIs need to regularly celebrate their successful alumni who have secured high posts in the Kingdom</td>
<td>Alumni will feel appreciated by their alma mater and, as a result, feel proud in return of the institutions they graduated from and thus be willing to give back to them in different forms.</td>
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CONCLUDING REMARKS

Bahrain is a small country but with a considerably good number of HEIs. There are good potential competencies in HEIs in Bahrain, especially the public ones, which have already graduated a generation of successful alumni who have reached high positions in the public and the private sectors.

Therefore, it is only logical that any form of alumni philanthropy should:

- Target those who are most capable of innovation in these HEIs;
- Allow them to lead the innovation and set its agenda; and
- Support their innovative endeavors in the process.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

This will ensure that alumni philanthropy be an effective vehicle for positive change, especially when the alumni are provided with opportunities to be highly-engaged in benefiting others and also learning from and with others instead of just playing a money-granting role.
REFERENCES


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