

FOREWORD

Although it is extremely difficult to predict precisely what changes would occur in higher education in the post-pandemic time, doubtlessly, the impacts of COVID-19 on higher education (HE) worldwide are evident and significant. According to the QS report (2020), these impacts range from teaching, research, learning activities and methods of instruction to the cross-border movement of students, academics and researchers, various forms of international collaborative activities, and so forth. Some researchers of higher education emphasize that the impacts the global outbreak of the pandemic on HE are stronger and enduring longer than expected, and will affect some countries and systems more radically than others (Altbach & de Wit, 2020; Martel, 2020; Morris et al., 2020). As for the policy measures that will make HE more responsive and relevant in the post-pandemic world, many strategies and suggestions have been put forward. Some argue that international educators must plan and work now toward new realities in the interest of local and global common goods (Marginson, 2020). However, others argue that it is getting harder to predict the future of HE and that more thorough research is needed (de Wit, 2021).

In order to explore what general and specific challenges HE in case countries and systems have faced and will face, and what strategies they have developed and will develop to deal with these challenges in a post-pandemic world in a global and international perspective, the Research Institute for Higher Education (RIHE) hosted an online international workshop, entitled COVID-19 and Higher Education, on 11th December 2021. Several case countries were selected. They include Australia, China, Japan, the UK, and some European countries.

Regarding the outline and procedures of the workshop, in the first section of the workshop, Professor Shinichi Kobayashi, Vice President of Hiroshima University and Director of RIHE made an opening speech, entitled “COVID-19 and Higher Education”. He made a brief introduction to the history of RIHE and the responses made by Hiroshima University to COVID-19. Professor Richard James from Australia, Associate Professor Shen Wenqin from China, Professor Motohisa Kaneko from Japan, Professor Hans de Wit from the Netherlands, and Professor Roger Goodman from the UK were invited to talk and primarily addressed the

following broad questions based on policy analysis, case studies, and survey findings. These questions were as follows.

1. What challenges have case countries and systems faced and would face because of the pandemic of 2020 and beyond?
2. What general and specific challenges can be identified based on the comparative research into typical case countries?
3. How have case countries and systems dealt and would deal with this challenge to shape a new normal?
4. What will be the implications derived from this global and comparative study for the future of HE?

In the second section, Professor Akiyoshi Yonezawa from Tohoku University, Japan, offered a response to the five speakers' presentations. Subsequently, there was a panel discussion, in which questions and comments were taken from participants.

Both general challenges at the regional level and specific issues facing individual case countries brought about by the pandemic were identified. Further, strategies and responses to address these challenges by the case countries were also discussed. There is little doubt that the presentations and discussions would help academics, students, administrators of universities and colleges, and other participants to have a better understanding of the situation of HE in the pandemic time and, more explicitly, the prospects of HE in these case countries.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the speakers, the commentator and all participants for their participation in and contribution for the workshop.

15 April 2022

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