

"Phronimos, Driving Innovations through Business, Education and Social Entrepreneurship" (A Path to Phronimos Education)
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Background

On the 8-10th May, 2008, The Business University Forum of Japan (Chairman, Dr. S. Toyoda of Toyota) organized an international Innovation symposium in Tokyo and Niigata. The symposium was co-hosted Business-Higher Education Forum (USA); the Council for Industry and Higher Education (UK); Japanese Government, OECD and the IAUP. This symposium was the followed-up symposium of 'Global Innovation Summit in Aichi-World Expo, Japan 2006' which was co-hosted by Council on the Competitiveness (US) and Japanese Government. The purpose of the symposium was to find a common platform for the Great Leap Forward. We enter the age of Phronimos Education again (Phronimos was coined by Aristotle, meaning possessors of practical wisdom. At times he gave it a more weighty definition to include those who would lead innovation).

Financial Crisis and Great Leap Forward

The financial crisis has developed into a huge global dilemma. On top of this we are inundated with aggravating problems of terrorism, high oil prices, food securities, water shortage, global warming, a worsening HIV/AIDS pandemic, a rampant drug trade and substance abuse, indiscriminate killing and growing numbers of juvenile crimes.

Some there are who groundlessly fear the imminent collapse of the world, but there are others among us who believe that we are on the eve of yet another paradigm shift—a great leap forward, and we are now in the middle of grand challenge. We learn from history that both these views have been vindicated to a point. That is to say, there have been societies that collapsed, but that was as a result of being unsuccessful at their grand challenge. And, humankind on the whole has continued to leap forward toward a better society.

This does not mean that we can sit and twiddle our thumbs in anticipation of a

better future. We know from the Diffusion of Theory that in any social reform there will be innovators and laggards. The difference between the two is enormous. For example, in the last leap were the people who lived as the barbaroi in the northern forests of the European Continent and as the pioneer in the new Continent, and who then came onto center stage. In Asia, it was a Japan, 'the Eastern Babaroi as the Chinese saw them, who joined the innovators and came downstage. On the other hand, Islam, China that until then had ruled unchallenged, and a divided India, struggling to maintain its independence and integrity, was forced to give way to the forces of change. We firmly believe that there should be no laggards left behind for this leap.

Julian Huxley(1887-1975) who served as the first secretary-general of UNESCO was a great biologist who expounded on the dual need for science and the evolution of the spirit. He proposed the establishment of a council for world education. Many of BUF members share the idea that the time appears to have come for us to take up his proposition seriously.

1. Activities since September 2008

BUF is now carrying two studies since the last September. One study is how Japan could contribute intellectually at the era of the great leap forward, and second is how we could innovate our higher education system. These reports will be announced very soon, and will be conveyed to Prime Minister as well as other concerned Ministry and people (English one will be available). Also, BUF is publishing a book (Japanese) based on what we have found through the symposium last year.

2. Plan of Action

BUF is currently supporting few social entrepreneur activities globally; some are, July 21-23, 2009 at University of Salford (titled: Smart City Futures, including a section - University Advantage - which shows how universities can be a real asset in helping business and the community design, develop and implement solution to drive constructive change to take us out of the current economic crisis; this has already created unique and workable solutions of real impact in city regions leading to a local Modern Renaissance - where citizens can again flourish in the global knowledge economy; finally

constructive change is driven by creating academic-business-community partnerships, where partners coach each other to understand their different skills/views and then both co-produce and co-create together in harmony), UK, Tropical social entrepreneurship meeting with Queensland Government, Australia (a preliminary meeting to discuss win-win solutions August 2009, and a following conference be mid 2010).

BUF is thinking to have a conference on 'council for world Phronimos education at the Great Leap Forward' (2011). BUF would appreciate if IAUP could collaborate from the beginning.