Higher Education Equity Across the Globe
Vienna, 8 October 2020
Talent is universal, but opportunity is not.

Tanitoluwa Adewumi, a refugee from Nigeria who lives in a shelter in New York City, went from chess novice to chess champion in little over a year.
Outline

- HE equity policies around the world
- What works: national and institutional policies
- Impact of Covid-19
Premises

- Equity = providing equal opportunities for access and success in tertiary education
- Circumstances beyond an individual’s control should not influence that person’s chances
FOR A FAIR SELECTION EVERYBODY HAS TO TAKE THE SAME EXAM: PLEASE CLIMB THAT TREE
Existing Work

- Scope of disparities
- Determinants of inequality
- What works
  - National policies
  - Institutional policies
The Lumina Studies

- Commissioned by Lumina Foundation
- Partnership with London Higher (Graeme Atherton)
Study 1. Two Tasks

- International Organizations
- National Policies
International Organizations

- ADB, AfDB, IDB, CAF
- OECD, UNESCO, World Bank
- European Commission
- SEAMEO
## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Policy Setting &amp; Regulatory Frameworks</th>
<th>Technical Assistance</th>
<th>Grants</th>
<th>Loans</th>
<th>Scholarships to Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interamerican Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
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<td>SEAMEO</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
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<td>World Bank</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
National Policies

- 71 countries
- Official documents, websites, contacts
- Who makes policies
- Strategies for HE / Specific strategy for equity
- Equity targets
- Instruments
- Resources
- Separate agency dedicated to equity
Equity groups

- Low-income groups
One day the poor will have nothing left but the rich.
Equity groups

- Low-income groups
- Females
How many talented girls are lost?
Equity groups

- Low-income groups
- Females
- Minorities
It is not wrong to be different.

It is wrong to be treated differently if you are.
Equity groups

- Low-income groups
- Females
- Minorities
- People with disabilities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity Groups</th>
<th>Country Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-generation students</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQIA</td>
<td>Brazil, Colombia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victims of sexual abuse / violence</td>
<td>Colombia, Ecuador, Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deported migrants</td>
<td>Ecuador, Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children of invalid veterans or civil servants</td>
<td>Mexico, Russia, Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign refugees</td>
<td>Australia, Colombia, New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internally-displaced people as a result of civil war or natural catastrophes</td>
<td>Colombia, Georgia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demobilized guerrilla fighters and paramilitaries</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students who do not speak the national language</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students with care experience, orphans, youth without parental care</td>
<td>Austria, Georgia Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single mothers</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
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<td>Families with more than 3 children</td>
<td>Georgia, South Korea</td>
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<td>Children of parents deported during the Soviet era</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
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<td>Jailed people, ex-offenders</td>
<td>Venezuela, Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students from occupied territories</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
National Policies

- Financial
- Non-Monetary
Financing Policies

- Fully or partially subsidized education
- Targeted free tuition
- Needs-based scholarships and grants / grants targeted for equity groups others than low-income students
- Student loans
- Equity-linked financial incentives built into the funding formula to allocate public resources to higher education institutions
- Financing-related regulations
Non-Monetary Policies

- Outreach: 28
- Reformed Admission: 38
- Institutions in Remote Areas/Distance Learning: 22
- Specialized Institutions: 16
- Flexible Pathways: 16
- Retention: 24
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Frequency of Countries who Monitor Equity only</th>
<th>Frequency of countries who include equity in QA only</th>
<th>Frequency of countries who do both QA and Monitoring</th>
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<td>East Asia (11)</td>
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<td>Pacific (2)</td>
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<td>South Asia (5)</td>
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<td>Sub-Saharan Africa (13)</td>
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<td>Western Europe (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total (71)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
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</table>
The Champions

- Australia, Cuba, England, Ireland, New Zealand and Scotland
• HE equity policies around the world
• What works: national and institutional policies
Two Tasks

- Measurement of disparities and impact studies of equity promotion policies

- Five national case studies
  - Government policies
  - Institutional policies
Case Study Countries

- Australia (ICL)
- Austria (tuition fees & social dimensions)
- Colombia (SL, retention)
- South Africa (legacy of apartheid, TFT)
- Vietnam (tuition fees, affirmative action)
Theory of Change

System-level enabling conditions
- Admission policies
- Pathways & bridges
- Quality Assurance
- Level of subsidies & distribution among institutions & students
- Tuition fee policies
- Funding for student aid (grants and student loans)

Institution-level enabling conditions
- Outreach activities
- Targeted admission policies
- Retention measures
- Financial aid (tuition exemptions, grants, loans)

Sequence of causal links
- Increased proportion of incoming students from under-represented groups
- Supportive culture & environment to make non-traditional students feel “at-home”
- Stimulating and enjoyable learning experience for all students
- Increased proportion of graduates from under-represented groups
- Effective psychological, academic & financial support for at-risk students
- Early identification of at-risk students
- Reliance on predictive analysis
Findings
Country Headlines

- Australia as model with effective, comprehensive equity policies
- Austria as leader with gender and refugees
- Colombia is pioneer in targeting student loans well and implementing widespread retention policies
- South Africa working hard to remove long-lasting effects of apartheid, pioneer with Targeted Free Tuition
- Vietnam has comprehensive equity plan but invests insufficient resources
## Equity Target Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Colombia</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-Income Students / First In the Family</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Students with Disability / Special Needs</td>
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<td>Migrants</td>
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<td>Victims of Conflict / Orphans</td>
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<td>Remote Regions</td>
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## Financing Instruments

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<tr>
<th>Equity Policy Instrument</th>
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<th>Colombia</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Tuition / Low Tuition in Public Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeted Free Tuition</td>
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<td>Grants &amp; Scholarships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competitive Grants to Institutions</td>
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<td>Funding Formula</td>
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## Student Loans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Colombia</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Income Contingent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Agency – Mortgage Type</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Bank – Mortgage Type</td>
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</table>
## Non-Monetary Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity Policy Instrument</th>
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<th>Colombia</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach / Bridge</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affirmative Action</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>
Not enough impact studies

- USA: 60
- Canada: 3
- Chile: 3
- Italy: 3
- Colombia: 1
- Finland: 1
- France: 1
- Germany: 1
- South Africa: 1
- China: 1
- UK: 1
- South Africa: 1
- USA: 60
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity Groups</th>
<th>Number of Countries</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Origin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult / Mature Learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>People with Refugee Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>14</td>
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</table>
What Works at the National Level

- Alignment of vision, leadership, goals, policy instruments, and resources
- Continuity of policies
- Adequate governance (contrasting Australia and Vietnam)
- Supranational influence (Austria)
Structural Features

- Secondary education coverage and streaming
- Admission policies
- Institutional diversification
- Availability of financial aid (grants and loans)
Institutional Diversification

- Low-status institutions (South Africa)
- Private higher education institutions
  - With student aid (Colombia)
  - Without (SA and Vietnam)
What Works at the Institutional Level

- Clear vision and strategy (Wollongong, Uniminuto)
- Equity leader and dedicated department (Wits)
- Partnerships with local authorities and businesses (Antioquia)
- Model practices picked up by other institutions and/or Government (Valle)
- Appropriate institutional culture for first-generation students (Australia)
• HE equity policies around the world
• What works: national and institutional policies
• Impact of Covid-19
Great equalizer or amplifier of disparities?

- Financial resources
- Access to internet (laptop, connection)
- Readiness to study online
- Increased risk of academic failure and emotional distress
Support at National Level

- Financial aid (emergency grants, moratorium on student loan repayments)
- Increased broadband capacity and subsidized connection prices
- Capacity building for online teaching
- Flexibility in QA and assessment/examinations
Support at Institutional Level

- Financial aid
- Donation or loan of laptop
- Internet plans
- Flexibility in assessment
- Academic and psychological support
Conclusion
Findings

- In many countries, only lip service
- Increasing focus on combination of financing and non-monetary measures
- Incentives for universities
- Initiatives from universities taken on by national governments
Recommendations

- More impact studies
- More disaggregated data on various equity groups
- Continue to focus on gender issues
Gender Imbalance

• Gender parity in most countries
• But not in STEM programs
• And not in senior academic positions
• Even less in leadership positions
### Gender Imbalance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Colombia</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of female students</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of female university leaders</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
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</table>
Recommendations

- More impact studies
- More data
- Continue to focus on gender issues
- More attention to the needs of students with disability
- Let us not forget refugee students
- Post-Covid, revisit structural determinants of inequality (funding, assessment)
Equality of opportunity

The impertinent courtesy of an invitation offered to unwelcome guests, in the certainty that circumstances will prevent them from accepting.

Richard Tawney
Exclusion  Integration  Inclusion