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Cross-Border Provision of Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia

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Abstract

The need for expansion of Higher Education in Ethiopia has been recognised with increased allocations of students to the Public Universities, the foundation of New Public Universities and establishment of Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs). Demand for Higher Education is predicted to continue to grow. Demand that cannot be met by national providers may be catered for by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) based in other countries. This Cross-Border provision in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the qualification awarding institution is based offers additional study opportunities for students. However, Cross-Border Higher Education also carries risks for students unless the relevance and quality of the provision can be assured and the qualifications awarded are recognized nationally and internationally for employment and advancement.

While Cross-Border provision may offer new opportunities and some possible risks to students, it poses a potential threat to local PHEIs. This is acute if students see the quality and relevance of the programs offered by Cross-Border providers as better than that of local PHEIs and the currency of the qualifications gained as of greater value in the national and international employment market. With strong competition from Cross-Border providers some PHEIs may seem less attractive to students.

On the more positive side, while Ethiopian PHEIs have established themselves primarily to provide Higher Education to Ethiopians in Ethiopia, there is no reason why they too cannot be involved in Cross-Border education. Cross-Border provision thus offers new opportunities for PHEIs in Ethiopia to engage directly with learners in other countries and/or join with HEIs outside the country in partnership or franchise arrangements to offer Cross-Border programs in Ethiopia and/or elsewhere.

This paper expands on the topic of Cross-Border Higher Education with respect to Ethiopia and elaborates on the challenges and opportunities for the Private Higher Education Institutions in the country.

Introduction

Higher Education is a service industry. Some of this education service is provided by state institutions and some by private providers. Like many other service industries, Higher Education is an international industry. This is true of both the public and private sectors.

Internationalism in Higher Education has a long history. Teachers travel. They do so to teach and so share their knowledge. Some countries, Ethiopia included, seek to attract, recruit and employ foreign teachers to help staff their Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). While the presence of international scholars in HEIs may be seen as just making up the numbers to staff programs adequately, this is a very narrow view point. An experienced international teaching force can bring in new subject knowledge, introduce new ways of teaching, learning and assessment and generally advance the curriculum. Some nations (the UK being one) are concerned that the teaching staff in some of their HEIs are not sufficiently international and the potential benefits of an international work force are not being perceived and pursued.

While there is international mobility of Higher Education staff this is small when compared to that of student mobility. Students have always studied outside their own countries. This is particularly true for students from developing countries, many of whom have traditionally 'gone abroad' for their Higher Education, particularly post graduate studies. This is not just a legacy of colonialism but characterizes the pattern of Higher Education in many countries, including Ethiopia. Study abroad can offer opportunities to study subjects

not available at home; the prospect of ‘better’ facilities and tuition; the award of a qualification that may be seen as of greater prestige and currency than one from a home institution and; the chance to study in the company of students of another country or countries who can enrich the student experience. In the past decade or so the level of student mobility has increased. This is particularly the case in Europe where the European Union has developed schemes to encourage students to study in countries of which they are not nationals for all or part of their degree programs. It is not that unusual for a European student to do a first degree in one country, a Masters in a second and a Doctorate in a third. But this is also true for some Ethiopian students. What is not well developed in Ethiopia, but is quite common in Europe, is for a student to study different courses for a first degree program in different countries. While the bulk of the study period may be in one country the program can involve stays of a semester or a year in different countries. The award of the degree is usually by the student’s home institution and this HEI recognizes the courses offered by other HEIs in other countries and accepts the grades gained by the student in the student’s overall assessment. So there is not just mobility of students but also mobility of curriculum, student assessments and qualifications.

The above are examples of the Globalization of Higher Education. It occurs via international students studying courses and full degree programs, student exchange schemes, inter-university collaboration and the hiring of international staff. It is characterized by outreach beyond national borders and by institutional linkages. It is not a new phenomenon. What is new is the rising level of activity. A report of student mobility (IDP, 2002) predicted that this would increase from 1.8 millions in 2000 to 7.2 million in 2005.

Higher Education serves two sets of stakeholders. The first stakeholders are the students who enroll for courses and programs of study. Students undertake Higher Education studies for a host of reasons but prominent among these is a thirst for knowledge and

understanding, a wish to improve their earning potential and a desire to be of value to society. The second stakeholders are the citizens who need the services of graduates to manage the affairs of state and provide essential services whether through public or private bodies. These stakeholders are represented in government who devise policies to develop and manage Higher Education in the best interests of the country. In the case of developing countries such as Ethiopia, such policies are quite naturally geared to the economic and social development of the country. But can national provision and international movement of students cope with the demand for Higher Education in countries with a high population and a current low enrollment level? Many think not and much activity and experimentation is going on with a range of alternative provisions of Higher Education being offered to students. This involves new delivery systems, new types of provider and new forms of collaboration within countries and across national borders: trans-national or Cross-Border Higher Education.

Cross-Border Higher Education

Cross-Border Higher Education is defined by the UNESCO/Council for Europe *Code of Practice in the provision of transnational education* as the following;

All types off higher education study programmes, sets of courses of study, or study services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the educational system of a state, different from the state in which it operates or may operate independently of any national system.

(UNESCO and Council of Europe, 2001)

The motivation for providing educational services is often commercial and the provision of an education service to other countries, including developing countries such as Ethiopia, can be a 'for profit' activity.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) distinguishes four modes of international supply of educational services.

Mode 1: Cross-Border supply (distance education, virtual educational institutions, educational software and corporate training through ICT delivery)

Mode 2: Consumption abroad (students studying abroad)

Mode 3: Commercial presence (*i.e.* local university or satellite campus, language training companies, private training companies) or program or institutional mobility.

Mode 4: Presence of natural persons (professors, teachers, researchers working abroad).

This paper is concerned with Mode 3 in which the service and not its consumer cross the national border. Such services can both complement and compete with local national provision. Where they provide education that cannot be provided locally, Cross-Border provision can be an asset. Where they encourage local providers to enhance the quality of their provision, they can also be seen as of benefit. However, where they respond to demand (or create demand) by providing low quality, high cost programs that do not lead to a recognized qualification they are of great concern.

The potential 'market' for Cross-Border Higher Education in Ethiopia is large. The need for expansion of Higher Education in the country has been recognized with increased allocations of students to the Public Universities (PUs), the foundation of New Public Universities (NPU) and establishment of Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs). Both public and private sectors are in a phase of rapid growth. Even so, demand for Higher

Education outstrips supply and is likely to continue to do so into the next Ethiopian Millennium. One reason for this is the expansion of the school system that will require more teachers and generate more students prepared for and seeking entry to Higher Education. Demand that cannot be met by national HE providers may be catered for by Cross-Border providers. However, Cross-Border Higher Education carries risks for students unless the relevance and quality of the provision can be assured and the qualifications awarded are recognized nationally and internationally for employment and advancement.

Providers and forms of Cross-Border Higher Education

The work of Machado Dos Santos (2002) indicates that Cross-Border providers of Higher Education fall into one of the following categories:

- regional or international consortia of institutions and/or organizations and companies
 - virtual institutions with no ‘campus’
 - regular universities with international outreach operations
- Knight (2005) has developed a typology of Cross-Border providers as shown in the table below.

Category	Characteristics
Branch Campus	A provider based in Country 1 sets up a satellite campus in Country 2 to provide courses and programs to students in Country 2 (and possibly also to students from Country 1 taking study abroad courses). The qualification is awarded by the provider in Country 1.
Independent Institution	A provider in Country 1 establishes a stand alone institution in Country 2 to offer courses and programs. The qualification is awarded by the locally established institution.
Acquisition/Merger	Provider in Country 1 purchases all or part of a HEI in Country 2. The qualification is awarded by the local institution.
Study Center/Teaching Site	Provider in Country 1 establishes study centers in Country 2 to support students taking their courses and /or programs. These may be independent or in collaboration with an institution in Country 2. The qualification is awarded by the provider in Country 1.

Affiliation/ Network	Providers collaborate through innovative partnerships to deliver courses and programs in their own and other countries through distance and/or face to face modes. The qualification is awarded by one or more of the collaborating partners or by 'the network'.
Virtual University	Provider in Country 1 delivers courses and programs to students in one or more different countries through distance education modes and generally does not have a local support service for students. The qualification is awarded by the provider in Country 1

The nature of the courses and programs offered by Cross-Border providers can also be categorized in relation to the ownership of the curriculum, the control exercised by the provider and the award of the qualification. This is shown in next the table (after Knight 2005).

The alliances that have been established cross not only national boundaries but also span the perceived public/private divide and also include business corporations. This is particularly the case in the provision of courses and programs in areas such as accounting, business, management and information and communications technology.

Category	Characteristics
Franchise	Here a provider in Country 1 authorizes a provider in Country 2 to deliver their courses and/or programs in Country 2 and/or other countries. The qualification is awarded by the provider in Country 1.
Twinning	Here a provider in Country 1 collaborates with a provider in Country 2 allowing students from Country 1 to take courses in Country 2. The qualification is awarded by Country 1.
Double/Joint Degree	Here providers in different countries collaborate in program provision so that students receive a qualification from each provider or a single joint award from the collaborating providers.
Articulation	Here various arrangements are established so that students can gain qualification credit for courses taken from any of the collaborating providers. The qualification is awarded by a student's 'home' institution.
Validation	Here a provider in Country 1 grants another provider in Country 2 authority to offer courses and programs that lead to an award from the provider in Country 1
Virtual/Distance	Here providers deliver courses and/or programs to students in different countries via distance education by tradition and/or on-line electronic means. Provision may include some in-country support for students via study centers.

In considering Cross-Border Higher Education it must be recognized that the 'export' of Higher Education is not exclusively a north to South activity with the route being from the developed to the developing world. Countries considered to be part of the developing world also export Cross-Border Higher Education to other countries (and not just to their near neighbors) so that the activity can be seen as multi-directional.

Before turning to the challenges and opportunities of Cross-Border Higher Education for the Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Ethiopia, it is important to consider some global concerns related to the growth of the provision.

Concerns about Cross-Border Higher Education

One major area of concern is that of quality and standards. Here the absence of national regulatory systems or the existence of weak and/or ineffective systems can permit the operation of providers who offer poor quality and issue qualifications that are sub standard and are of little or no worth. Added to that, the curriculum may not be relevant for students or to the needs of country. A case in point is the Cross-Border provision of MBAs in South Africa. When the South African Quality Assurance Agency began to look at the programs offered by foreign institutions, less than half were up to the required standard and were contextualized to the needs of the students and the nation. Providers of inappropriate programs were prevented from operating in the country.

Linked to quality and standards are qualifications. It is not unknown for Cross-Border providers to offer qualifications that are not recognized in their own country. Many such providers will not have sought recognition in the countries where they operate and so their qualifications are unlikely to be accepted, particularly when their 'graduates' seek employment in government agencies or international organizations, far less seek to pursue study or employment opportunities outside their own country. This is seen as a particular

problem with distance education providers and on-line operators who have no in-country presence. Some so called 'rogue providers' offer accredited qualifications but the accrediting body is not recognized internationally or even nationally and is often a commercial organization to which providers pay a fee for accreditation based on superficial evidence of their operations. These accreditation agencies parallel the 'diploma mills' that award qualifications for payment and essentially are fraudulent bodies. Having said that, it is important not to confuse the many genuine and highly respected accreditation bodies (such as those that accredit college programs in the USA) with the more unscrupulous operators. Of course, the potential students of Cross-Border Higher Education providers are seldom in a strong position to distinguish the rogue from the genuine! They need the help of their home quality assurance agency to protect and guide them. Additional help may also be provided by the country of origin of the Cross-Border provider. For example, the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) assures not just the quality of provision of Higher Education in the UK but also the international operations of all UK HEIs. One of their recent publications reports on the Cross-Border activities of UK HEIs in China (QAA, 2006). Australia is another country where the national HE quality agency has a concern for the quality of Cross-Border courses and programs of their institutions.

The concerns related to Cross-Border Higher Education outlined above are matters of consumer protection. Just as citizens have a right to be protected from dangerous and inferior goods, so too do they have a right to be protected from poor quality education and worthless qualifications. This is a role for Higher Education quality agencies. However, they face a very difficult task in seeking out Cross-Border providers, regulating their operations and assuring their quality. Martin (2006) describes a series of country case studies that serve well to illustrate the difficulties involved.

National HEIs, both public and private funded, tend to be stable entities that expect to operate indefinitely. Indeed, regulations governing the establishment of private HEIs

normally require strong evidence of stability so that students who embark on a program do not find that they cannot complete it because the HEI has closed the program or the HEI itself has disappeared. Similarly, employers of graduates or HEIs that receive applications for graduate studies can normally refer to the HEI to check on a graduate, a course or a program. Not so for all Cross-Border providers some of whom may have a short term existence in a country (or no real existence at all) and have little commitment to enrolled students if the operation becomes unprofitable. Students who start but are unable to complete a program because the provider has pulled out will not gain the desired qualification and will have wasted their money.

When Cross-Border providers have a strong profit motive then they may charge high fees, often much higher than local public and private HEIs. This may be perceived positively by potential students as they consider that because they are paying a high fee they will get a high quality learning experience, superior tuition and a qualification from a foreign institution that will give them a competitive advantage in the home labor market and an entry to international study and employment. Regrettably, this is not always the case. High fees also mean that access is restricted to more privileged students who can meet the costs.

It is not only a high fee that can restrict access to Cross-Border Higher Education. Foreign providers with an in-country presence tend to focus on centers of population and so restrict access to students that reside there or can arrange to do so. On-line study requires that students have regular access to the Internet. In developing countries that have yet to establish reliable, nation-wide electronic communications and where few people have computers and home access to the Internet, this is an obvious barrier.

While there are some major concerns about Cross-Border provision of Higher Education the critique must be balanced by mention of advantages and recognition of the very many genuine, reputable international providers who provide high quality courses and programs

and offer qualifications that are accepted worldwide. Cross-Border Higher Education can provide otherwise unavailable opportunities for study, it can supplement national provision, it can help and support the development of local systems, encourage innovation and act as a driver to promote relevance, enhance quality and raise standards of the programs offered by local providers.

In Ethiopia, the UK Open University, recognized internationally for the high quality of its distance education provision, has for some years been offering a Cross-Border MBA program. Its graduates include the Prime Minister. More recently the University of South Africa (UNISA), another major provider of distance education, has established a presence. There are also other examples of Cross-Border Higher Education in Ethiopia from providers on other continents.

Ethiopian PHEIs and Cross-Border Higher Education: the challenges

But how do the PHEIs in Ethiopia relate to the provision of Cross-Border Higher Education in the country? What challenges are posed by these trans-national operators? While, at the moment, there may be few Cross-Border providers offering course and programs in the country, the number is likely to grow and the challenges to local PHEIs are there. It is recognized that there are two main areas of challenge. The first is concerned with students and the second with staff.

While the market for Higher Education is still expanding it has to be recognized that Cross-Border providers will seek to take a share of this. The foreign operators will target those potential students seeking courses and programs perceived to enhance their employment opportunities and which they (the providers) can offer at low cost and with few resources. They will not look to provide a comprehensive curriculum portfolio but will seek a niche market. They will market their provision vigorously and advertise extensively with

inducements such as scholarships and ‘free’ study materials. PHEIs are likely to face some fierce competition for students, possibly in areas where they already offer courses and programs at marginal cost benefit. Because the Cross-Border providers may be much larger than Ethiopian PHEIs (they are international) they have better economies of scale. They may also be able to avoid the current Ministry of Education accreditation requirements demanded of local PHEIs.

If the Cross-Border providers are ‘international HEIs’ with a well established good reputation, other things being equal, they are likely to compete strongly and successfully against many local PHEIs on terms of prestige if nothing else. But, there are other factors that may make the Cross-Border providers more attractive to students than local PHEIs. The most important factor is recognition of a high quality of provision and the standard of the award, particularly where the quality assurance of the Cross-Border provision is undertaken by the home country of the Cross-Border provider, as is the case for UK and Australian based institutions. Even if quality is at a par with that of local providers, a perception of higher quality may prevail. It is a similar situation with regard to the standard of an award and its currency.

If, as it may be argued, the experience of many Cross-Border providers is such that they can provide a higher quality than Ethiopian PHEIs and this is evidenced by successful students, then they will become even more attractive to those potential students who can afford to make the choice. The threat to Ethiopian PHEIs is the loss of students to Cross-Border providers with a consequent impact on their profitability and possible viability. The challenge to Ethiopian PHEIs is to demonstrate that their provision is every bit as good (if not better and more appropriate) as that of Cross-Border providers and that the qualifications that they award are, at the very least, equal to those offered by foreign institutions.

As indicated above, it is not just students that are attracted to Cross-Border providers of Higher Education. A Cross-Border provider may also be a magnet for staff and so draw staff away from the PHEIs. It is well known that, in Ethiopia, many staff employed in public universities also work part-time for the private sector. If a Cross-Border provider offers a better part-time package than the Ethiopian PHEI then the sector may be drained of some of its experienced part-time staff. Cross-Border providers may pay a higher salary, provide greater fringe benefits, offer better opportunities for staff development and further study and give access to new course materials and texts that staff can use in their regular teaching. Importantly, employment with a well known international university may be seen as a more prestigious addition to a *cv* than being on the staff of an Ethiopian PHEI that may not be well known outside the country. The threat to Ethiopian PHEIs is the loss of staff, not just those employed part-time but also their full-time academics and administrators. The challenge to Ethiopian PHEIs is to find ways to attract and retain staff against not just local but international competition.

The PHEIs in Ethiopia have an important role to play in the planned expansion of Higher Education. This is embedded in government policy. It is thus not unreasonable that the PHEIs should seek some protection from any corrupt or unfair practices of Cross-Border providers. They might also seek to argue that Cross-Border providers should be required to be accredited in the same way as they must be if they are to operate legally and professionally. Of course, this is much easier said than done. While the matter may be straightforward for providers that have a physical presence in the country with such as a satellite campus or a study center, it is not the case for distance education and on-line providers whose operations can be, and are often, difficult to detect: far less to regulate.

Ethiopian PHEIs and Cross-Border Higher Education: the opportunities

But what of the opportunities that Cross-Border Higher Education provides for Ethiopian PHEIs? There are several. While it does not require a 'beat them or join them' attitude, there are ways in which Ethiopian PHEIs can work with and learn from experienced Cross-Border providers. They can also launch their own Cross-Border operations either individually or in partnerships with one or more other providers in Ethiopia or in one or more other countries. It is understood that at least one Ethiopian PHEI is already active in the provision of Cross-Border Higher Education.

One way in which local PHEIs can engage with Cross-Border providers is to allow them to make use of their services and facilities. Many PHEIs in Ethiopia have very well developed printing and distribution systems for distance education materials. These could be of value to Cross-Border providers of 'traditional' paper-based distance education. A number of Ethiopian PHEIs have established regional bases and study centers. Again, these could be of use to Cross-Border providers as could the staff that manages the facilities. Cross-Border providers may also welcome the opportunity to use PHEI campus facilities for face to face sessions with their students and for access to library resources and computer technology. It would be up to PHEIs to negotiate appropriate financial and other arrangements.

The above can be seen as a strictly service level arrangement between a local PHEI and a foreign provider. It offers little benefit to a PHEI other than financial. More ambitious PHEIs may wish to pursue academic linkages with Cross-Border providers. These could take a variety of forms. A starter position could be to seek a franchise to run courses and/or programs developed by the Cross-Border provider and using the curriculum and resources of the Cross-Border provider but taught by the staff of the Ethiopian PHEI using their facilities. As indicated in an earlier table the qualification awarded would be that of the

Cross-Border provider. The advantage to the Cross-Border provider is that it would have a reliable in-country partner and would gain a franchise fee. The benefit to the Ethiopian PHEI is that it would attract students to an 'international' course and/or program, and retain a portion of the fees they pay. An important additional benefit is that they would have access to a curriculum and curriculum materials that they otherwise would not have and could use this to model improvements to their own curriculum. Furthermore, there could be important staff development outcomes as staff engage with alternative curricula and new teaching, learning and assessment regimes. This could lead to quality enhancements of the courses and programs offered by the PHEI.

A further benefit of a franchise arrangement is that students registered with the Cross-Border provider in its home country or in another country where it operates may be encouraged to study a course with the Ethiopian PHEI and so enrich their learning experience. The benefit to the Ethiopian PHEI, in addition to any financial gains, is that this brings an international dimension to the learning experience of their students by having them study alongside foreign students. This can be attractive to Ethiopian students and also of value to PHEI staff as well as students.

Keeping in mind that many PHEIs in Ethiopia offer courses and programs by distance education and that this is a common delivery mode of Cross-Border providers, there should be scope for co-operation between local PHEIs and trans-nationals. It was stated earlier that South Africa did not allow a number of Cross-Border providers of MBAs to operate in the country as their programs were not tailored to the national need. Ethiopian PHEIs must be in a strong position to work with foreign providers to adapt their distance education materials to the local situation and so make them more relevant and acceptable. Of course, this is also true for the curriculum and the resources for 'regular' students. For the PHEI there are potentially important gains in knowledge and experience in such as curriculum development and resource design that can be mainstreamed into other areas of their

operations. As with any good arrangement there are gains for both parties. However, this should not obscure the main purpose of any educational venture *i.e.* to provide a high quality and relevant educational experience to students and reward their success with a qualification that has credibility and portability.

A further arrangement that an Ethiopian PHEI may wish to seek is to gain recognition by a Cross-Border provider of its own curricula. This might initially be a single course but could lead to full degree programs. The validation by foreign institutions of degree programs offered by Ethiopian PHEIs would be an important landmark in establishing the international quality and standards of private higher education in the country and could help attract more foreign students to study in Ethiopia. In addition to its cultural richness, Ethiopia has two big attractions to foreign students. The first is that the language of tuition is English. The second is that the cost of tuition and the cost of living are modest when compared to most English speaking countries. At the moment, foreign students are difficult to attract as they are uncertain of the quality of the curriculum, the level of tuition, the nature of the learning experience and the standard of the award.

Finally, Ethiopian PHEIs may wish to take on the role of Cross-Border provider themselves. This is a major step to take both academically and financially. While some PHEIs may wish to go it alone and seek to market their courses and programs beyond Ethiopia, others may wish to join forces with an experienced Cross-Border provider. In such a partnership the Ethiopian PHEI might contribute most to the curriculum and delivery system while the foreign partner might provide essential expertise in Cross-Border operations. Of course, just as a foreign provider might seek to offer its courses and programs in Ethiopia in association with an Ethiopian PHEI so might an Ethiopian PHEI wish to offer its courses and programs in another country in association with an HEI in that country. Just as foreign providers can become involved in Higher Education provision in Ethiopia in many ways, so too can Ethiopian PHEIs become involved in Cross-Border

Higher Education provision in other countries, either individually or collectively and with and without foreign partners.

Decision making about Cross-Border Higher Education

In considering providing Cross-Border Higher Education, Ethiopian PHEIs may wish to give careful thought to the courses and programs they will offer and the countries in which they will be offered. It seems sensible to build on academic strengths established at home rather than try to develop new areas for Cross-Border curricula. It may also be wise to target countries where there is an Ethiopian Diaspora who are most likely to know of the PHEI and/or countries which have strong links with Ethiopia and/or are located in the same geographical region.

There are also other considerations that deserve careful attention when embarking on Cross-Border Higher Education. Quality and Standards are of paramount importance. A HEI that is deemed to provide poor quality and set low standards in its Cross-Border provision damages, not only its own reputation but also the reputation of Higher Education in its home nation. Where a country guards the quality and standards of its Higher Education system by a regulatory body (such as a quality assurance agency) and an Ethiopian Cross-Border provider fails to meet the established criteria for approval of its Cross-Border activity that too is very damaging for the HEI and for Ethiopian Higher Education.

Reputations in Cross-Border Higher Education can be established and lost with the choice of partner organizations and HEIs. If an Ethiopian PHEI is seeking to join forces with a Cross Border provider to offer Cross-Border education in a foreign country or to facilitate a Cross-Border operation in Ethiopia then that partner needs to be selected with great care. The choice of a poor quality, low standard partner operator by an Ethiopian PHEI would

not be helpful, the choice of a 'rogue' operator would be a disastrous error! Ethiopian PHEIs interested in participating in Cross-Border Higher Education are advised to become familiar with the Guidelines for Quality provision in Cross-Border Higher Education prepared by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2005). They should proceed only if they and any potential partners can comply with these guidelines.

PHEIs have choices to make with regard to their reactions and actions on Cross-Border Higher Education. As in other matters, choices should be based on good information and a consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of various actions and inactions. If this paper has alerted PHEIs in Ethiopia to the growth of Cross-Border Higher Education, provided some useful information, indicated challenges and opportunities and prompted them to the need to consider their position and take action, whether this be to act or not to act, then it will have served its purpose.

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