

**The Role of Public-Private Partnership in Promoting Quality of Education  
and Enhancing the Institutional Sustainability of Private HEIs**

**Ayengew Tessera**

**Lecturer, St. Mary's College**

**Abstract**

*This study attempts to present the roles of private - public partnership in providing quality education and enhancing the institutional sustainability of private HEIs. Data were collected from the highest administrative bodies (Presidents, Deans, Associate Deans, External Relation Officers and Apprenticeship and Practicum offices) of four selected private HEIs.*

*The results revealed that there is no effective and meaningful partnership among the stakeholders in tertiary education. The private HEIs are not satisfied with government investment schemes and accreditation policies. Similarly, the private HEIs have not established a viable partnership with sister colleges and universities at home and overseas as well as with the business organizations and the local community. Other things being equal, meaningful and effective partnership among all the stakeholders of education is recommended to solve the problem of educational quality and the institutional risk of private HEIs.*

**1. Introduction**

Education has central and multi-faceted roles in country's socio-economic and technological as well as political development. Being a holistic system, education embraces the human capital contribution and its resultant humanistic and social capital building dimensions. Education plays an instrumental role in conquering ignorance, poverty and disease- the three evils of society.

The study documented by the World Bank (2002) remarked that tertiary education contributes a lot to build up a country's capacity for participation in an increasingly knowledge- based world economy. Tertiary education has a direct influence on national productivity, which largely determines people's living standards and country's ability to compete in the global economy. Third world countries, including Africa, are suffering from economic and political marginalization. If they can't enhance knowledge, third world nations would be at risk of being further marginalized.

Since education has paramount importance to the development of a nation, it has to be accessible to all. But the question is who can provide education to all. In the period

**Aynew Tessera. The Role of Public-Private Partnership in Promoting Quality of Education and Enhancing the Institutional Sustainability of Private HEIs.**

before the collapse of communism, most third world countries (including Ethiopia) have been given the responsibility of providing education for the people. Stated differently, the education sector has for long been dominated by governments at virtually all levels of the education ladder. Especially, governments have exclusively been involved in the funding and management of Tertiary Education Institutions.

Nevertheless, the government alone could neither satisfy the rapidly increasing demand for tertiary education nor could be able to sustain continuous provision of adequate and high quality education. There is no any other best option for providing more opportunities for tertiary education than allowing and encouraging the establishment of private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs).

Cognizant of this fact, most Third World countries have since the collapse of communism been opening their door to private individuals and organizations so as to complement government efforts at higher education provision. Indeed, this policy change, it is said, has not come from internal dynamisms. Stated differently, much of the unanticipated private higher education growth springs from forces beyond higher education policy *Perse* (Levy, 2002). It rather has resulted from a neo-liberal economic change in the post-communist period. This change has involved powerful global tendencies, which limit the financial role of the state, privatize, and internationalize in overall development policy (Levy, 2002). In this regard, central and south Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa provide ample examples. Hence, these days, the Private HEIs have become the fastest growing sectors in many countries of the world.

By the same token, the post- 1991 Ethiopia has experienced the proliferation of Private HEIs. In a matter of less than a decade's time a number of colleges have been opened throughout Ethiopia, though most are concentrated in Addis Ababa- the capital. By conservative estimate students in private HEIs account for 24% of the total enrollment statistics in Ethiopia (the Private HEIs forum, 2004). Hence, the expansion of Private HEIs in Ethiopia would definitely narrow the gap on the supply side as contrasted to the demand side. Obviously, in a situation where public education is insufficient to guarantee

access to schooling, or good quality of instruction, demand-driven private schools of all types normally fill the gap and offer their services to the community (Kitaev, 1999).

However, expansion by itself could not be a guarantee for the provision of high quality education in a sustainable manner. In spite of this expansion, the Ethiopian Education system is at a precarious situation since the quality of education rendered in both public and private higher institutions is questionable. Amare and Temechew (2002) noted the existence of full consensus among Ethiopian educators on the failurity of education to play a developmental role. They further forwarded that the profile of graduates of the different education programs in Ethiopia has also been under attack by employers and researchers for their lack of creative, innovative and problem solving approaches. Furthermore, Selashi (2001) concluded that education policymaking and implementation is still in crisis since policies are short of attaining intended results.

Therefore, unplanned expansion of higher education is potentially dangerous for the quality of education (McVicar, 1996). In developing countries, including Ethiopia, poorly established and regulated private provision has not meet the over all objective of improving access to better quality higher education (Kotecha, 2003). People argued that the quality of progrmmes at private HEIs seemed to have been sacrificed for quick commercial gain (Badroadien, 2002). Hence, as the field of higher education is liberalized, a mechanism for ensuring quality of the education and the institutional sustainability of tertiary education institutions especially of private HEIs must be designed. The fast expanding private HEIs should be geared towards providing quality education to citizens in a sustainable manner. To this end, all the stakeholders in education should join hands to support these emerging, mostly infant private HEIs. All the social players must combine efforts with private HEIs and start acting so as to foster the quality and accessibility of tertiary education.

Being other things equal, strong partnership among the stakeholders not only ensures the provision of quality education but also enhances the institutional sustainability of PHEIs. Partnership among the Government, private and public HEIs, the world of work and the

community at large is instrumental for the provision of quality education which thereby enhances the institutional sustainability of HEIs, especially the private ones for they are entirely based on tuition fees.

## **2. Objectives of the paper**

### **2.1 General Objective**

This paper generally attempts to present the roles of private- public partnership in providing quality education and enhancing the institutional sustainability of PHEIs.

### **2.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this paper are to:

- a. Assess the role of Tertiary education in the overall development of a nation.
- b. Analyse the role of public-private partnership in the provision of quality education and in enhancing the institutional sustainability of PHEIs.
- c. Examine the partnership experiences of some selected PHEIs.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Techniques of Data Collection**

This paper uses both secondary and primary sources of information. Literature review constitutes the secondary sources of data. Interviewing concerned individuals on structured and Semi-structured questionnaires constitute the primary data collection technique. Purposive sampling technique is employed to arrive at samples to be interviewed. Four private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) - St. Mary's College, Micro link Information Technology College, Admass College and New Generation University College are selected for this study for they are relatively well established. The highest administrative bodies (presidents, Deans, Associate deans, External Relations Officers, and Apprenticeship and Practicum Officers) of these colleges are purposively selected for interview.

### **3.2 Techniques of Data Analysis**

The data collected were analyzed by using qualitative technique. Indeed, certain statistical tools like percentages and frequencies were also employed.

## **4. General Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 General Results**

The following are the general findings of the questionnaire survey on the condition of private- public partnership covered by this study.

**Table1:** Responses of private HEIs to the importance of private- government partnership in the provision of tertiary education.

Level of importance	The extent of your believe in the importance of strong government- private partnership in the provision of tertiary education.							
	St. Mary's College		Admass College		Micro link Information Tech. College		New Generation Uni. College	
	F	0%	F	0%	F	0%	F	0%
To a very great extent	5	100	4	80	5	100	3	60
To a great extent	0	0	1	20	0	0	2	40
To a limited extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
not importance at all	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100

Remarks: F: stands for frequency; 0% indicates percentage values.

**Table 2:** The condition of government support to private HEIs and the level of the private HEIs involvement in curriculum designing/ development and revision.

S. No.	Items	Name of Private Colleges															
		St. Mary's College				Admass College				Micro link Information Tec. College.				New Generation University College			
		Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Receiving investment incentives (lease-free land, tax exemption/reduction, lower interest rates) from the government.	3	60	1	20	1	20	4	80	1	20	3	60	3	60	2	40
2	Whether the institution is operating in its own buildings	0	0	5	100	0	0	5	100	?	?	?	?	0	0	5	100
3	Satisfaction with government accreditation policy	0	0	5	100	2	40	3	60	1	20	3	60	1	20	4	80
4	Whether the decentralized accreditation system (at the Ministerial level, Bureau level, and Zonal/Kifle Ketema level) in Ethiopia helps promote PHEIs.	1	20	3	60	3	60	1	20	2	40	2	40	2	40	2	40
5	Preference to have an independent, non-governmental accrediting body in Ethiopia instead of government institutions.	3	60	1	20	5	100	0	0	5	100	0	0	3	60	1	20
6	Whether always working hand in-hand with the government for curriculum designing/development.	0	0	3	60	2	40	3	60	2	40	3	60	0	0	5	100
7	Whether always working with the government in curriculum revision	2	40	3	60	1	20	4	80	1	20	4	80	0	0	5	100
8	Appropriateness of your involvement in the above tasks.	5	100	0	0	5	100	0	0	5	100	0	0	4	80	1	20

**Table 3:** The state, level, and issues of partnership between Private HEIs and Public/ Government-owned HEIs.

S. No.	Items	Name of Private Colleges															
		St. Mary’s College				Admas College				Microlink Information Tec. College.				New Generation University College			
		Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Whether your college/ University has a partnership programme with public HEIs	5	100	0	0	4	80	1	20	4	80	0	0	4	80	1	20
2	Whether partnership is at the college/University level	4	80	0	0	3	60	0	0	4	80	0	0	4	80	0	0
3	Partnership at the departmental level?	0	0	4	80	0	0	3	60	0	0	4	80	0	0	4	80
4	Partnership based on collaborative research.	0	0	4	80	0	0	4	80	0	0	5	100	1	20	4	80
5	Partnership based on academic exchange	0	0	4	80	0	0	4	80	2	40	3	60	4	80	0	0
6	Partnership based on short or long-term training.	0	0	4	80	4	80	0	0	0	0	3	60	0	0	4	80
7	Partnership based on resource sharing (human & material).	4	80	0	0	0	0	4	80	3	60	0	0	0	0	5	100



**Table4:** The Condition of Partnership between Private HEIs and Business Organizations/Employers.

S. No.	Items	Name of Private Colleges															
		St. Mary's College				Admass College				Micro link Information Tec. College.				New Generation University College			
		Yes		No.		Yes		No.		Yes		No.		Yes		No.	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Whether there is meaningful partnership b/n your institution & businesses.	5	100	0	0	4	80	0	0	3	60	1	20	2	40	3	60
2	Satisfaction with the relations your institution has with business organizations /employers.	4	80	1	20	4	80	0	0	4	80	0	0	4	80	0	0
3	Whether your institution has established mechanism through which it can identify the skills, knowledge & kinds of behavior employers need from graduates?	5	100	0	0	4	80	0	0	4	80	0	0	5	100	0	0
4	Whether your institution has been receiving feedbacks from x-graduates.	4	80	0	0	5	100	0	0	4	80	0	0	3	60	2	40
5	Whether there is association of the graduates of your college.	2	40	0	0	4	80	0	0	0	0	4	80	0	0	5	100
6	An attempt to establish association of your x-graduates	5	100	0	0	4	80	0	0	4	80	0	0	0	0	4	80

**Table 5:** The State of Partnership b/n Private HEIs and the Local Community.

S. No.	Items	Name of Private Colleges															
		St. Mary's College				Admass College				Micro link Information Tec. College.				New Generation University College			
		Yes		No.		Yes		No.		Yes		No.		Yes		No.	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	A viable partnership with the local community	4	80	1	20	4	80	1	20	5	100	0	0	2	40	3	60
2	Involvement in coordinating/supporting development programmes of the local community.	2	40	2	40	5	100	0	0	0	0	3	60	0	0	5	100
3	Any joint programmes with the local administration (Kebele, Wereda, etc)	5	100	0	0	3	60	2	40	0	0	4	80	0	0	5	100
4	Whether local administration has ever invited your institution for some sort of support.	4	80	0	0	4	80	0	0	3	60	0	0	0	0	4	80
5	Do you believe that your institution is properly responding to the invitations & demands of the local community?	2	40	2	40	4	80	1	20	5	100	0	0	2	40	3	60
6	Whether your institution has established mechanisms for evaluating the trust, which the local community has in your institution.	3	60	0	0	1	20	0	0	2	40	2	40	1	20	0	0
7	Student representatives in your AC	0	0	3	60	0	0	4	80	0	0	5	100	4	80	1	20
8	Do you believe in the participation of student representatives in certain decision-making bodies?	5	100	0	0	4	80	1	20	4	80	0	0	5	100	0	0

**Table 6:** The State of Private- Private Partnership.

S. No.	Items	Name of Private Colleges															
		St. Mary's College				Admass College				Micro Link Information Tec. College.				New Generation University College			
		Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%
1	Partnership programme with other private HEIs	4	80	0	0	5	100	0	0	5	100	0	0	1	20	2	40
2	Partnership taking place at the college/ university level.	4	80	1	20	5	100	0	0	5	100	0	0	1	20	0	0
3	Partnership taking place at departmental level	1	20	4	80	0	0	5	100	0	0	5	100	0	0	1	20
4	Partnership based on collaborative research	0	0	4	80	3	60	2	40	0	0	3	60	1	20	0	0
5	Partnership based on academic exchange	1	20	3	60	3	60	2	40	0	0	3	60	0	0	0	0
6	Partnership based on training (short or long-term)	1	20	3	60	2	40	3	60	0	0	3	60	0	0	0	0
7	Partnership based on resource sharing (human & mat.)	1	20	3	60	0	0	5	100	3	60	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Membership to the Association of private HEIs	4	80	0	0	5	100	0	0	5	100	0	0	0	0	2	40

## **4.2 Discussion**

In this section the state of partnership among the stakeholders in tertiary education (private HEIs, the Government, public HEIs, the world of work and the community) will be discussed in accordance with the questions and categories adopted for assessing private-public partnership and its role in promoting quality of education and enhancing the institutional sustainability of private HEIs.

### **4.2.1 Private- Government Partnership**

As can be observed from the findings of the survey (tab. 1&2), 85% suggested a very great importance of Private-Government partnership in the provision of tertiary education. Similarly, 15% replied private- Government partnership in tertiary education as important to a great extent. The respondents apparently reached a consensus on the necessity of private- Government partnership in the provision of tertiary education.

Nevertheless, the findings of this survey show an apparent divergence between necessity and practice. When asked whether private HEIs are receiving investment incentives such as lease- free access to land, tax reduction/ exemption on income, book/material imports, & lower interest rates from the government banks, 40% responded that the institutions had received tax exemption only for the first three years. On the other hand 50% responded that the institutions are provided with no any investment incentives from the government. This is contrary to investment objectives of the FDRE, which, among other things, intends to accelerate the country's economic development and enhance the role of the private sector in the acceleration of the development of the country's economy (Investment Proclamation 2002, arts. 41&46). Except Micro link Information Technology College, which is operating in its own plus rented buildings, the rest three Colleges covered in this study are operating in entirely rented buildings due mainly to land problems (lack of lease-free access to land). Lack of their own buildings definitely puts private HEIs at a permanent risk of closure whenever tuition fees decline or whenever there is disagreement with the owner(s) of the buildings. This is what is meant by institutional insustainability of the private HEIs. Similarly, if they have their own buildings the money being spent on house rents would have been used for improving the

quality of education- for opening new programmes and upgrading the existing ones.

By the same token, 75% of the respondents are not satisfied with the existing government accreditation policy. The respondents criticized the government, as applying stringent accreditation policy on private HEIs that is going to the extent of limiting the number of students that the private HEIs should take.

This is a kind of double standard, which entirely discourages private HEIs. At the same time, the accreditation process is criticized as too bureaucratic to go through as well as corruption- prone. When asked whether decentralized accreditation system (accreditation at Minister, Bureau, Zonal or Kifle Ketema levels) helps promote private HEIs, 40% responded that no difference would come so long as these hieratical institutions are government affiliated. In line with this point, 80% preferred an independent accrediting body, which can operate without taking side neither to the public nor the private but to the principles and objective realities on the ground. According to the respondents, it is only in this way that uniform standards and rules could be applied to the public and private HEIs, bias could be avoided, and bureaucratic hurdles of the accreditation process could be eased.

Furthermore, when asked whether private HEIs are always working with the government for curriculum designing/development, 70% responded negatively, 20% gave affirmative answer. However, about 30% of the respondents acknowledged that there are occasions when the government invites them to participate in curriculum designing/development. But the respondents expressed the fact that the government is reluctant to take their suggestions and comments as positive inputs. Similarly, 80% of the respondents responded that private HEIs are not always working with the government in curriculum revision, while 20% responded positively.

The findings show that the pertinent stakeholders- the private HEIs are nearly excluded. The government is imposing curricula and other education related policies without the expressed consent of the stakeholders. This kind of procedure makes policy implementation very difficult; it also restricts the innovative and creative ability of

education institutions, and finally leads to educational crisis.

The author of this paper strongly believes in the involvement of pertinent stakeholders in the process and implementation of curriculum designing/development and revision. When asked whether the involvement of private HEIs in these processes is appropriate, 95% of the respondents gave affirmative answers. Without the involvement of principal stakeholders (such as schools) in the issue of tertiary education, it is hardly possible to run education in a manner to meet socio-economic needs of the country. As partners in tertiary education, the government and private HEIs should develop common vision and mutual trust. Through meaningful partnership, the conceptual framework of complementarities and convergence could be addressed. As noted by Kitaev (1999) the development of private HEIs could: reduce the burden on government expenditure; improve efficiency in operation of schools (e.g. Cost- efficiency); increase diversity and choice in terms of educational provision; and lessen the pressure on government funding. Although at its infant stage, the private public forum set up by the Ministry of Education is a good beginning. The forum has intentions to look into the options to increase public/private partnership and the private sector's contribution to the development needs of the country. We look forward to the delighting results of the forum.

#### **4.2.2 . Private- public Partnership**

This Section basically presents the state of partnership between private HEIs and government- owned/ public HEIs. As principal stakeholders in education, these institutions should work closely for the purpose of promoting quality education in Ethiopia.

As can be seen from the findings of the survey (tab. 3) 85% of the respondents assured the existence of partnership between private & public HEIs. In line with this, the author of this paper has found out that two of the four colleges covered by this study have partnership programmes only with public HEIs abroad/overseas (details are discussed below). This indicates the fact that private HEIs do not have closer links with the sister institutions operating at home. Respondents from St. Mary's College indicated that the

College has links with Nazrath & Debre Birhan Teacher Training colleges, Debut University, as well as Indira Gandhi Open University of India. Respondents from Micro link information Technology College indicated that the college has partnership programmes with Mekele University at home and Acadia University of Canada abroad.

When asked whether partnership is taking place at departmental or college level, 75% responded that it is taking place at the college level. This implies that departments in private HEIs are simply agents of the presidents, or deans who are mostly the founders or owners, or both of the college. Verticality of command and lack of internal democracy, as seen here, restricts the autonomy of departments and prevents them from taking innovative and creative initiatives. This in turn limits the growth and diversity of the private HEIs. Similarly, 35% responded the issue of partnership as resource sharing (human & material), 5% collaborative research, 30% academic exchange, and 20% training (short or long-terms. The figures indicate the fact that the supposed partnership is mostly based on resource sharing (human and material). This further implies the fact that resource is the pressing need of private HEIs, the most important factor preventing private HEIs from development and institutional stability. It seems that academic research is very minimal among Private HEIs (5%) as indicated above. Bernasconi (2004) has corroborated this by saying that absence of research function and reliance on part-time faculty is an ostensible feature of private HEIs. It is suggested that partnership should also take place in the form of collaborative research.

In general, to provide high- quality education and enhance their institutional sustainability, private HEIs should establish strong partnership with government-owned HEIs both at home and overseas. Since government-owned HEIs have an old-existence and are relatively better established, private HEIs have a lot of lessons to learn from public HEIs. The provision of competitive and high quality tertiary education necessitates collaborative partnership between sister colleges and universities at home and abroad. Linkage between private and public HEIs provides private HEIs with insights into global issues and perspectives, and with an exposure that enriches curricula, research and public- out reach programmes. This in turn would enable private HEIs to provide

competitive high quality education and hence ensures their institutional sustainability.

### **4.2.3 Private- Business Partnership**

When asked whether there exists partnership between private HEIs and business organizations/ employers, 70% responded affirmatively. According to the respondents, the issues of partnership are apprenticeship and practicum, short-term training (retraining of the employees). When asked whether the relations they have with the employers satisfy the private HEIs, 80% of the respondents responded positively. 90% of the respondents indicated that private HEIs identify the skills, knowledge and kinds of behavior employers need from graduates through such mechanisms as close consultation with employers, conducting need assessments occasionally, and through informal communications with the employers. 80% of the respondents also ensured that PHEIs receive feedbacks from their x-graduates; 10 % responded the other way round. Feedbacks are being received on individual basis and through graduate associations. According to 20% of the respondents, the PHEIs have association of their x-graduates, while 45 % of the respondents indicated the absence of graduate associations.

Partnership between Tertiary education and business organizations/ employers has proven to be an effective means for preparing young people for positive post-school outcomes. The goal is to promote quality education with early orientation to work that enables young people to pursue continued education and challenging employment.

This sort of partnership further enables HEIs to envision broad curriculum changes that integrate learning in the class room and learning through experience in the work place. Here, schools must provide appropriate curriculum, resources, times and places of learning and be held primarily accountable for the level of work readiness of their students. Schools must make clear for all students the connection between learning in school and future success in the labour market and must provide opportunities for career and employment orientation and awareness.

Similarly, employers/ business organizations, as a primary benefactor of successful



students, must share a greater responsibility for establishing and nurturing the quality of the work force. They should clearly define and communicate to schools the competencies they require of successful employees, and should provide expanded opportunities for work- based learning for students. Business organizations/ employers are expected to help HEIs through the provision of apprenticeship, mentoring and consultation services for the- would- be- graduates of HEIs. This would eventually promote the quality of education and thereby enhance the creditability institutional sustainability of HEIs, especially those in the private sector.

#### **4.2.4 Private-community Partnership**

75% of the respondents witnessed the existence of partnership between PHEIs and the local community, 25% indicated the absence of a viable partnership between these two parties. According to the respondents, the issue of partnership rotates round sporting activities (i.e. establishing and sponsoring the college's sport team) and scholarships (offering scholarships to individuals). As to the author of this paper, establishing and sponsoring the college's sport team and offering scholarships to individuals upon request, doesn't indicate partnership between private HEIs and the local community. The private HEIs should, in collaboration with the local administrators, be engaged in such activities as environmental sanitation, reproductive health (HIV/AIDS), adult education programmes, and caring for local needy. Indeed, some of the respondents indicated their college's involvement in the above activities.

When asked whether private HEIs are involved in co-ordinating/ supporting the development programmes of the local community, 35 % of the respondents answered affirmatively while 50% of them answered negatively. This data also strengthens the author's position expressed in the aforementioned paragraph. Few of the respondents, however, noted that the PHEIs are engaged in assisting schools existing in their Weredas through donating books for their libraries and giving free scholarship for staff in the schools. This is again what is known as linkage between institutions, not between institutions and the community.

Similarly, 40% of the respondents indicated the existence of joint programmes between PHEIs and the local administration (Kebele, Wereda, or Zone) in the form of supporting local administration by training their staff. But, 55% of them witnessed its absence. When asked whether their institutions have ever been invited by the local administration for some sort of support, 55% answered affirmatively while 20% of them responded negatively. When asked to convert their support provided for the local community during the last five years into Monetary value, respondents from St. Mary's College indicated that the college has spent approximately 250,000 Birr, Admass College approximately 300, 000 birr, and New Generation University College 10,000 birr. Micro link information Technology College did not mention the figure. As can be judged, the largest percentage of the money has been spent on scholarships and sporting activities. When asked whether PHEIs have put student representatives on Academic Commission, 20% said yes, but 65% said no. One reason given by the respondents for not putting student representatives on Academic Commission is that students are represented through the student affairs office. However, some indicated their plan to do this very soon. Inline with this, 90% of the respondents expressed their believe in the participation of student representatives in certain decision-making bodies.

The author of this paper has of the opinion that since students are part of the community their participation in certain decision- making processes would strengthen college-community links. At the same time, putting student representatives in Academic Commissions as is the case in Canada, Germany, Britain, and New Zealand (Dadelszen, 1998) would improve institutional governance, accountability, and decision-making and would minimize the risk of institutional failure.

Obviously, close co-operation between community and HEIs is important for community development (improved health, infrastructure, education). At the same time, it also contributes to upgrade the image, esteem and credibility and trustworthiness of PHEIs. In order to acquire positive image and high esteem, as well as credibility from the members of the local community, PHEIs should design and develop community outreach programmes such as community- based activities (reproductive health, environmental sanitation, sporting services, free scholarship for local needy, adult education for mothers

and house servants).

#### **4.2.5 Private- Private Partnership**

Concerning the existence of private- private partnership, 75% of the respondents gave affirmative answer where as 10% gave negative answer. Except New Generation University College, all are members of the private colleges association composed of 27 members. According to 5% of the respondents, partnership is taking place at departmental levels, but as to 75% of them, it is taking place at the college/ University level. Finally, partnership is based on collaborative research 20%, academic exchange 20%, training 315% and resource sharing (human and material) 20%.

Some criticize that link among private institutions may not bring new experiences partly because of the glaring similarities in the most ostensible features of private HEIs: absence of a research function, reliance on part time faculty, verticality of command, absence of internal democracy, responsive to tighter array of constituencies, emphasis on teaching programmes not required expensive equipment or infrastructure and the tendency to cluster around fewer disciplines than in public institutions (Bernasconi, 2004).

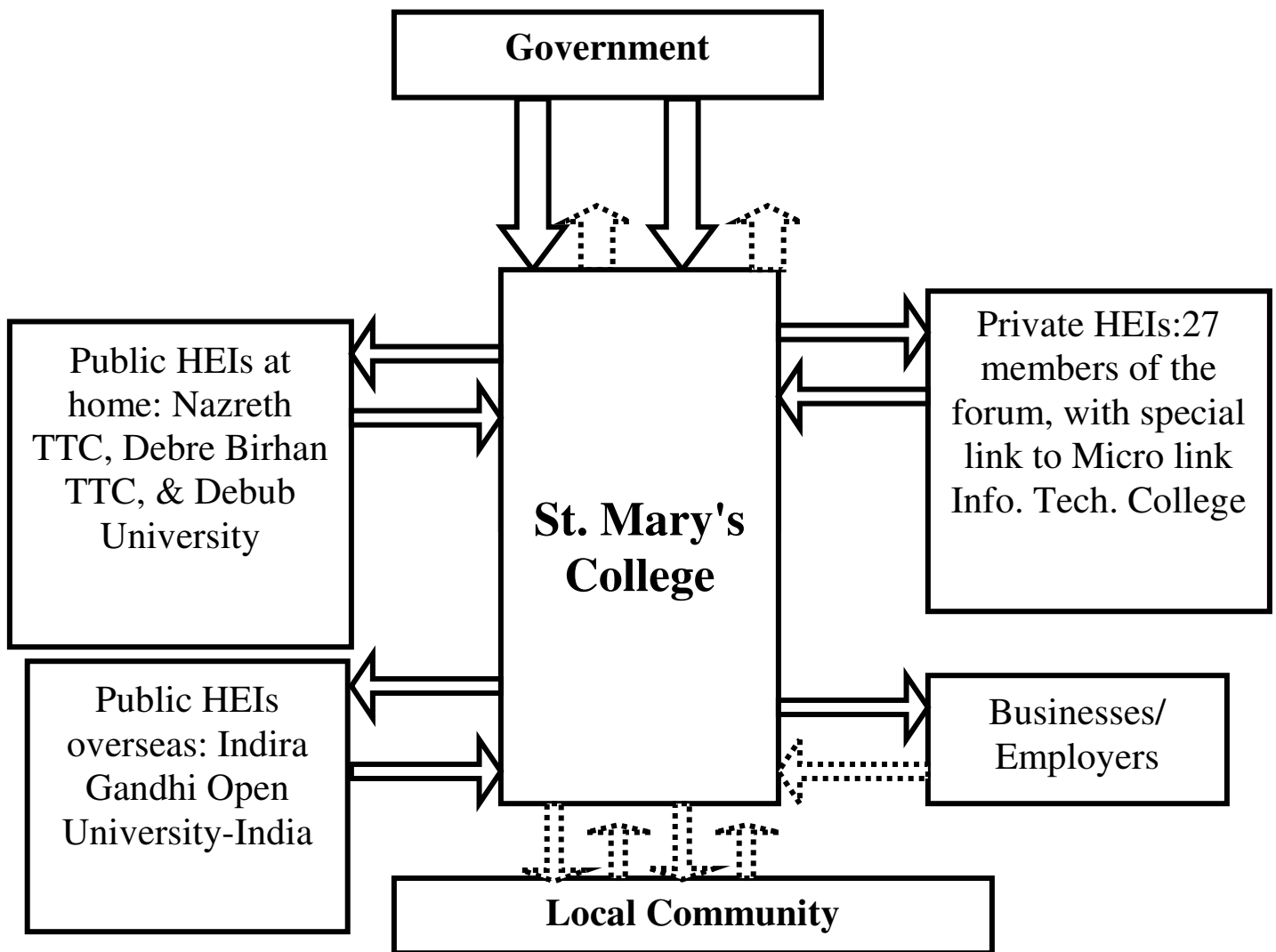
Although, generally, private institutions are expected to compensate for the inadequacies of public education by offering instructions in locations, or subjects which the public sector does not cover and to contribute to the social objective of providing schooling to the greatest possible number of children, they may sometimes be in competition with government-owned institutions. In this case private-private partnership and cooperation becomes crucial so as to strengthen the position and voice of private institutions against the government. That is why about 27 private HEIs have established the private institution forum in 2004. Among the principal objectives of the forum, the following are pertinent to this point. (1) ensuring the growth and quality of higher education in a sustainable way; (2) working with the government on designing curricula and developing training/policy; (3) and safeguarding the rights and benefits of member institutions.

#### **4.3 Summary of the results**

## St. Mary's College

The college was established in 1998 and has 10 academic departments: Accounting, Marketing Management, and Secretarial Science & Office Management, Information Technology, Law, Languages, Social Sciences, Maths, Basic Sciences, and Civics, Natural Sciences, and Teacher Education (certificate).

The status of the college's link with different stakeholders looks like the following.



In the link between the government and the college, the down-ward arrows indicate the long and strong hands of the government pushing the institution(s) to accept government policies and decisions without their involvement in the decision-making process and even

without their expressed consent to the decision. On the other hand, the broken line, upward arrows indicate the hands of the institution(s), which are very weak (unable to influence the government) and at the same time dwarf, involving in educational decision-makings very rarely- only when the government, at its good will, invites them.

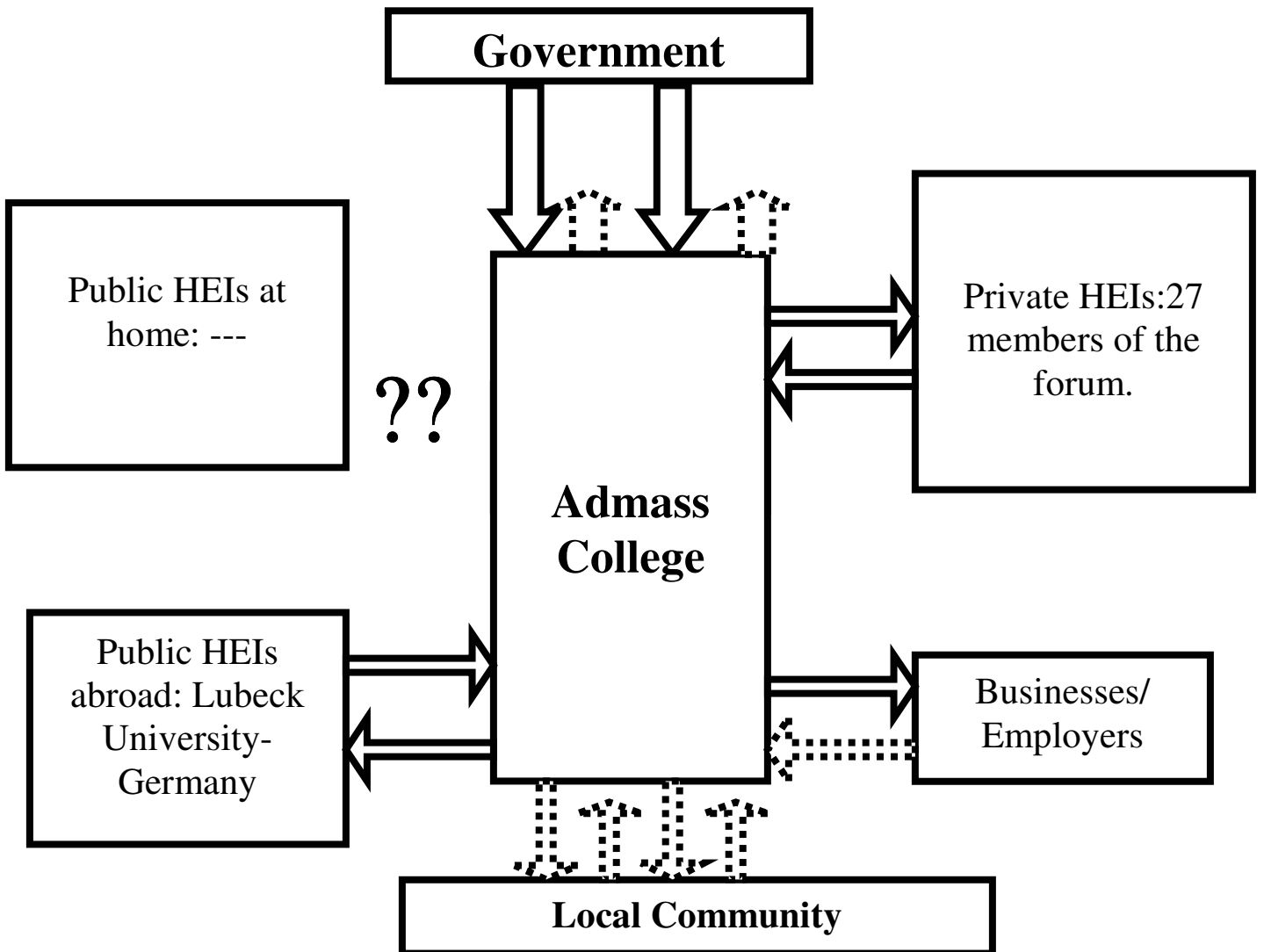
The arrows linking the institution with the public and private HEIs at home and abroad indicate more or less balanced relationship between these educational institutions.

The full line arrow that has linked the institution and the employers indicates strong and frequent pressure from the college pressing the employers to open their doors for apprenticeship and practicum exercises for their students. On the other hand, the broken line arrow that comes from the employers to the institution indicates very little and reluctant attention of the employers/ business organizations towards private HEIs. This implies the fact that private HEIs are expected to clear a lot of hurdles in front and go further so as to establish mutual trust and cooperation with employers.

The link between the institution(s) and the local community is represented by broken line arrow just to imply the absence of strong and viable partnership between them. The arrows directed from the institution(s) to the local community are taller than the arrows coming from the reverse direction implying the fact that it is the institution that has the means to reach the community even at certain occasions (may be through offering scholarships to local needy, or participating in certain community-based activities). It seems that the community does not have the means to exert an organized influence upon the institution (s) since the institution(s) has not put student representative on Acs who can act on behalf of the community.

### **Admass College**

The college was established in 1998 and has five academic departments. These are: Accounting, Marketing Management, Information Technology, Secretarial Science & Office Management, and Applied fields department (composed of import/ export management, Purchasing & supplies Management, Transport Management, & General Management). Vertical & Horizontal link of the College looks like the following.



In the link between the government and the college, the down-ward arrows indicate the long and strong hands of the government pushing the institution(s) to accept government policies and decisions without their involvement in the decision-making process and even without their expressed consent to the decision. On the other hand, the broken line, up-

ward arrows indicate the hands of the institution(s), which are very weak (unable to influence the government) and at the same time dwarf, involving in educational decision-makings very rarely- only when the government, at its good will, invites them.

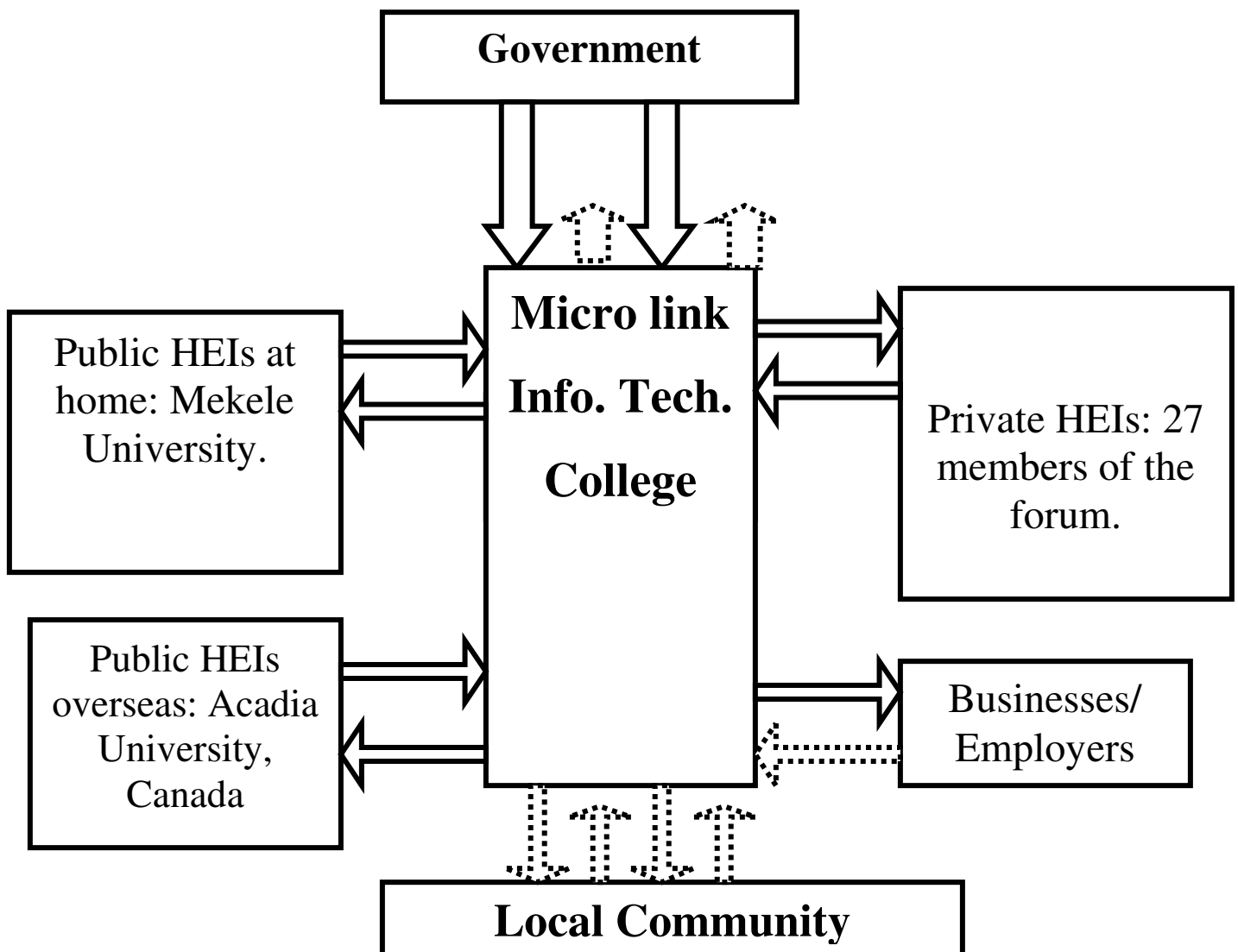
The arrows linking the institution with the public and private HEIs at home and abroad indicate more or less balanced relationship between these educational institutions. The question marks indicate the absence of link between the college and public HEIs at home for unknown reasons.

The full line arrow that has linked the institution and the employers indicates strong and frequent pressure from the institution pressing the employers to open their doors for apprenticeship exercises for their students. On the other hand, the broken line arrow that comes from the employers to the institution indicates very little and reluctant attention of the employers/ business organizations towards private HEIs. This implies the fact that private HEIs are expected to clear a lot of hurdles in front and go further so as to establish mutual trust and cooperation with employers.

The link between the institution(s) and the local community is represented by broken line arrow just to imply the absence of strong and viable partnership between them. Refer to the case of St. Mary's college.

### **Micro link Information Technology College**

It was founded in 1998 and has Six Departments: Management information system, Software engineering, computer engineering, Accounting Information system, economic and finance, and Business administration. The vertical and horizontal link of the college looks like the following.

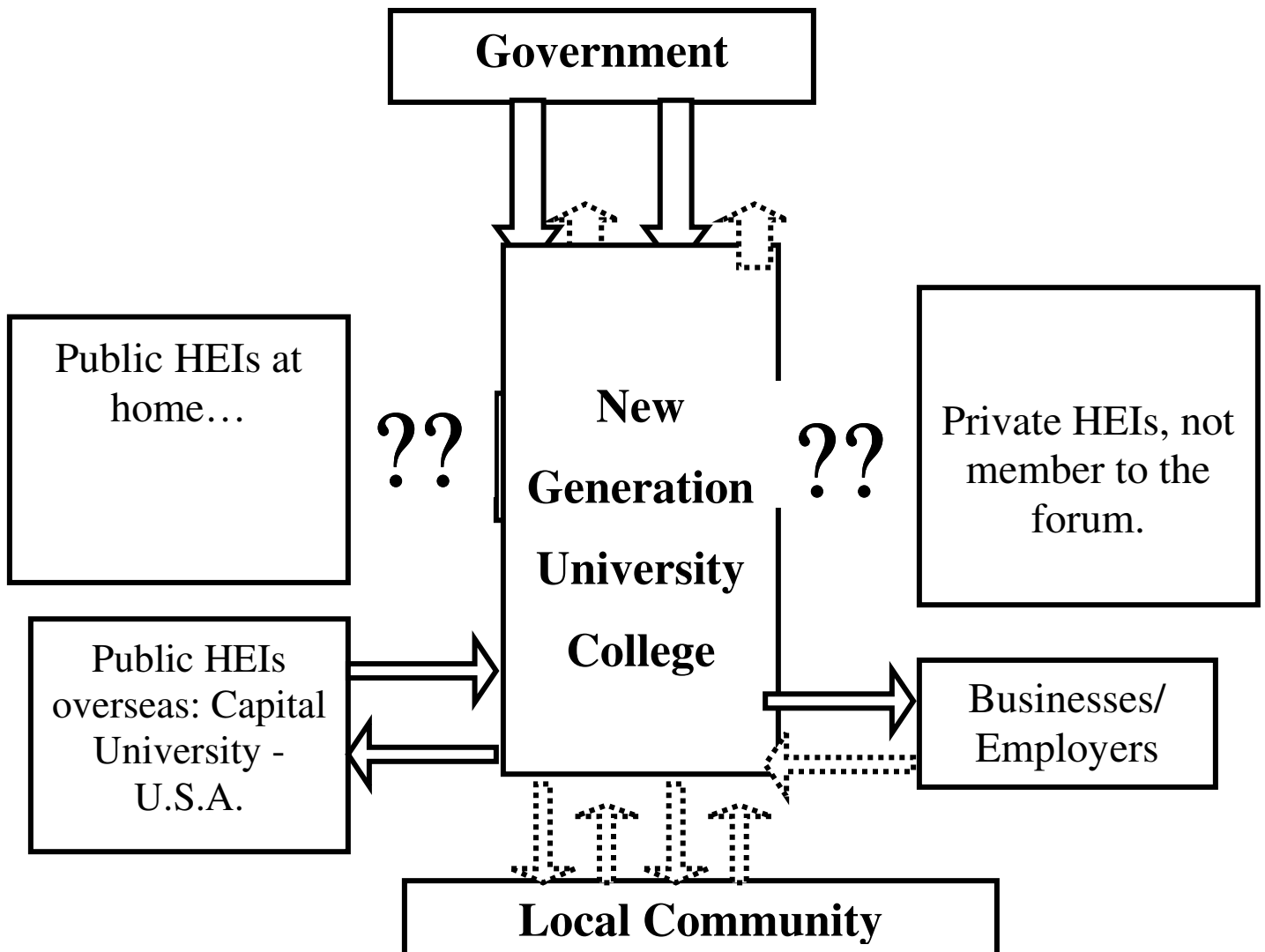


The partnership status of Micro link Information Technology College is similar to the case of St. Mary's college.



### New Generation University College

The college has been established in 2002 and has four academic departments: Law, Business administration, International Relations, and Information Technology.



With regard to private-government partnership the status of New Generation University College is similar to the other colleges above.

The arrows linking the institution with the public HEI abroad indicate more or less balanced relationship between these educational institutions. The question marks put between the institution and public and private HEIs at home indicate the absence of partnership between it and other sister colleges/ universities at home for unknown reasons.

The link between the college and the employers and the local community is the same to the colleges above.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Tertiary education is fundamental to national development. The role of quality tertiary education in the country's development is super. The government alone can neither satisfy the growing demand for tertiary education nor provide quality education in a sustainable manner. Thus, there should be partnership among the pertinent stakeholders in tertiary education.

The partnership between private HEIs, the government and, public HEIS at home is not effective and meaningful. In the absence of strong and meaningful partnership, it is very difficult to imagine the existence of common vision and mutual trust b/n the private & public sectors in Ethiopia. Considering the role of private HEIs in the country's development, the government and other public sectors should encourage private HEIS.

Similarly, it seems that partnership between private HEIS and employers is not based on sincere co-operation and shared responsibility.

Further, the private HEIS are not largely involved in community- based activities.

Although the beginnings are encouraging Private-Private partnership is at its infant stage and hence satisfactory results are not yet recorded.

## References

- Atchoarena, David and Esquieu P.(2002).Private technical & vocational education in sub-Saharan Africa. UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Bernasconi, Andres.(2004). External Affiliations and Diversity: Chile's Private Universities in International perspective. Programme for Research on Private Higher Education, Educational Administration & Policy studies. University at Albany, State University of New York 1400 Washington Ave. Working paper No. 4 November 2004.
- Kitaev, Igor. (1999). Private Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: A re-examination of theories and concepts related to its development and finance. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning/ UNESCO.
- Kotecha, Piyushi (2003). "Improving the quality of partnerships b/n the public and private sectors in South African higher education" in Glenda Kruss and Andre Kraak (eds.) (2003) A contested Good? Understanding Private Higher Education in South Africa. Center for International Higher Education. Lynch School of Education, Boston College, University at Albany.
- Kruss, Glenda and Kraak, A. (eds.) (2003). A Contested Good? Understanding private higher Education in South Africa. Centre for International higher Education. Lynch School of Education, Boston College, University at Albany.
- Levy Daniel C. (2002).Unanticipated Development: perspectives on Private Higher Education's Emerging Role Program for Research on Private Higher Education working paper No. 1 state university of New York 1400 Washington Ave. Albany, N.Y.
- McVicar, M. (1996). 'Educations in Farham, D. and S, Horton (Eds.) Managing the New Public services, pp. 219-241, London: Macmillan
- Smeenk, Sanne and Teelken, C. (2003) Toward a single quality assessment system in higher education? A paper presented at the ECER in Hamburg, Sept. 2003.
- UNESCO. (1998). Higher Education in the Twenty-first century: Challenges and Tasks viewed in the light of the Regional conferences, World Conference on Higher Education, Paris, 5-9 October 1998.
- World Bank Report. (2002). Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for

**Aynew Tessera.** The Role of Public-Private Partnership in Promoting Quality of Education and Enhancing the Institutional Sustainability of Private HEIs.

Tertiary Education. Washington, D.C., the World Bank.