

The Rise of Global Schooling

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For centuries, K-12 education around the world has been organized at the municipal, provincial or national level with educational institutions rarely operating in a meaningful way beyond their country's boundaries. This state of affairs is likely to continue in publicly funded schools, as they are tasked to serve students and families within certain geographies. However, trends in the macro economy are giving rise to private educational institutions that upend these familiar boundaries and provide services on a global basis.

A quick read of any major newspaper or magazine reminds us of the highly connected nature of our world, from *global* climate change to *global* financial crises to *global* media. A perusal of any school's mission statement will show that locally funded public schools and single-city private schools recognize the importance of graduating students with a global view. Few, however, are in a position to rethink the assumptions behind their own geographic limitations. The purpose of this chapter is to identify global trends in the demand for educational services and show both how new institutions can serve particular needs across geographic boundaries and how the education marketplace can be re-segmented by new providers.

Let's begin with some "educational snapshots" of schools and school systems around the world. These serve as a backdrop for themes that will be explored in the later portion of this chapter.

The West's Greatest Export

In Shanghai, the American School has two sprawling campuses covering 50 acres and serving nearly 3,000 students. One campus is in the older part of the city, Puxi, while the other is on the farthest outskirts of Pudong, the sprawling newer section of this 20 million population megapolis. The second campus was built to accommodate the huge demand that the initial site,

all 600,000 square feet of it, was unable to fill. The desire for these American schools is so great that some students commute an hour and a quarter *each way* to the Pudong facility while waiting to get into the more convenient Puxi.

When I visited both campuses in 2007, I expected to find a “slice of America” imbedded in Shanghai, i.e. a school filled with American expatriates living and working in Shanghai. Wrong. I was surprised to discover that Chinese students constituted a significant percentage of the enrollment, a fact made more puzzling since in China only foreign passport holders are allowed to attend international schools. In one classroom I observed, most of the children were locals. I asked one Chinese parent, “Why did you choose the American School?” Her answer was immediate: “I want my child to go to college in the United States and this is the best path.” I then inquired how she was able to get her child into the school. “Oh, I have a second passport from Chad. All the Chinese citizens here have dual citizenship and an additional passport from somewhere else,” she said in flawless English without missing a beat.

America may have a problem exporting its manufactured goods, but as this Shanghai mother indicated, American education (actually English-language education, of which America is the leading provider) is in great demand the world over. That demand is driven by multiple factors. At its core is admiration for American and other English-speaking cultures and our way of life. Another factor is that a huge percentage of the world’s outstanding universities and colleges are in the United States, England, Canada, and Australia. Look at these facts, all drawn from the annual *London Times* list ranking the world’s universities:

- of the top 100, 83% are in the U.S., U.K., Australia, Canada and Western Europe;
- of the top 100, only 2 are in mainland China;

- of the top 100, *none* are in Brazil, India, or Russia, three of the vaunted-for-their-growth “BRIC” countries;
- *none* of the top 100 are in 16 of the world’s largest 20 countries, including as those just noted and also Indonesia and Mexico;
- and of the top 20 universities in the world, *all* are in the U.S., UK, Australia, and Canada.

What does this mean? If you are a student in mainland China, your statistical chance of getting into one of the 2 “ranked” universities there is “0.” In India there are more school-age children than the entire population of the United States—and no ranked universities. In most countries of the world, the higher education options for children are not very attractive. Many parents who have the necessary resources hope to send their children to the United States for college (as illustrated by my daughter’s recent college visit to Brown, where hundreds of South Korean applicants toured the campus along with a handful of Americans).

This demand for Western higher education has a “trickle down” effect on K-12 demand in all of these countries. The K-12 needs of parents planning to send their children to the West for college are different than those of parents who expect their children to attend higher education institutions in their home country. Their children *must* achieve English fluency and an understanding of Western ways. And such results are not likely to be produced by traditional “local” schools, public or private.

They are looking west.

Meanwhile, Back in New York, Parents Look East

If the West currently has a lock on the “quality higher education market,” then the East, particularly China and India, owns a big part of the economic future of the world. Sophisticated Western parents know it—and know that their children must be prepared for a world in which “there are two or three chefs in the kitchen” (as one Chinese businessman recently said to me). They understand that a Western-centric education is not a modern one; that, in the century ahead, French, however classy, will not serve someone nearly as well as Mandarin; and that a semester abroad in Florence, however beautiful, is no longer sufficient international exposure.

Yet, just as Chinese “local” K-12 schools are not preparing their children for Western higher education, U.S. “local” schools, whether public or private, are not graduating students truly ready for a global economy. Even the finest private schools only graduate a tiny percentage of their children fluent in a second language, many still starting languages in later grades and not approaching it with the seriousness required for mastery. (A report by the British Council concludes “that monoglot English graduates face a bleak economic future as qualified multilingual youngsters from other countries are proving to have a competitive advantage.”) Participation in foreign exchange programs is low, and for the most part, these programs are European oriented. History and literature courses are mostly domestic or Western.

And, unlike their Asian counterparts, American parents don’t have nearly as rich an offering of international schools that could serve as “windows” to the East. The result: in Western societies the demand for a much more globally-minded education at the K-12 level is unmet.

Armani and Prada meet Cornell and Harrow

Walk through any high-end mall in Hong Kong, Dubai, or London and the names are all

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the same: Hermes, Polo, Calvin Klein, Yves St. Laurent, Armani, and dozens more. These global brands transcend all national boundaries and are in high demand by consumers the world over.

Though many in the educational community would view brands as superficial and even meaningless, consumers don't see it that way. Brand is just another way of saying reputation, and that is something hard earned. Not only in fashion and cars but increasingly in schools and colleges as well, consumers *trust* brands—and that trust is a form of demand not to be underestimated. In the world of education, that used to be a local phenomenon. No more.

The Cornell School of Medicine recently graduated the first class at its Qatar campus. Qatar is currently “shopping” for top K-12 schools from around the world via its “Outstanding Schools Initiative,” which has as its mission “the recruitment of top private international schools to open branch campuses in Qatar.” The Harrow School, founded in 1572 via a charter from Queen Elizabeth I, now has campuses bearing its name in Bangkok, Beijing, and Hong Kong. Similarly, Dulwich, dating to 1616 and King James, has a campus named after it in the Pudong section of Shanghai. Though not using its name, King Abdullah of Jordan virtually imported the concept of Deerfield in creating Kings Academy, nicknamed by some “Deerfield in the Desert.” College du Lemman, a 50-year-old 2,000 student international school in Geneva, just opened a campus in Chengdu, China.

The brands noted above represent local institutions morphing into global entities. An equally successful strategy, already being worked on by companies around the world, is the creation of new educational entities, conceived from the beginning as global brands. These may not have the “running start” that an existing brand owns, but they have the advantage of being able to seize a more modern innovative positioning unburdened by pesky legacy matters.

Perhaps the earliest K-12 “global brand” is an organization called the United World Colleges, a network of 12 International Baccalaureate schools around the world (which, in full disclosure, both my wife and one of my daughters attended.) The vision of the school, which was founded at the height of the Cold War by German educationalist Kurt Hahn, is to bring students from around the world together during their last two years of high school in order to overcome religious, racial, and cultural misunderstandings. Its 40,000 graduates from locations such as Wales, India, and Singapore are sought after by universities around the world.

Jeju Island Goes Global

Jeju Island sits off the coast of Korea and is dubbed “Korea’s Hawaii” by some because it is a favorite of Asian tourists. This resort community, however, anticipates offering a different kind of tourism in the near future.

Motivated by (a) the fact that 460,000 Korean students (including tens of thousands of pre-teens and teenagers accompanied by parents) have already gone abroad to study; (b) the rapid expansion of this trend, up 160% from 2001; and (c) Korea’s “educational trade deficit” of nearly \$4 billion, Jeju’s provincial government is taking action to seize an opportunity. It plans to build a \$780 million “global education city” consisting of 12 new international schools serving over 10,000 K-12 students. It will recruit these schools similar to the aforementioned approach of Qatar. A report in the *Korea Times* says, “The project aims to draw students planning to study abroad to the island, offering cheaper tuition, easy access and better education. The plan will also contribute to fostering the education industry, as well as improving national competitiveness, the Jeju provincial government predicts.”

Abu Dhabi One Ups Philadelphia

Most of the demand noted above is consumer demand, i.e. “B to C,” the phrase used in business to connote business-to-consumer relationships. There is another type of demand, also growing in the world of international education, called “B to B,” i.e. business-to-business or institution-to-institution. In the case of education, this tends to be governments seeking out educational entities—for example, Qatar recruiting Cornell, as noted above.

The earliest large-scale example of such B to B educational activity in the United States was Philadelphia’s recruitment in 2003 of half a dozen private U.S. organizations to manage over 40 public schools. EdisonLearning (formerly Edison Schools), a company I founded, was the largest of those. This was an example of a U.S. school system recruiting U.S. organizations to manage U.S. public schools. Abu Dhabi is taking that to a new level.

Over the past few years, the Abu Dhabi Education Council has recruited educational firms from around the world to manage over 30 of its public schools. Their objective is to increase academic performance within their schools, and they are turning to organizations such as SABIS (Lebanon), Nord-Anglia (UK), Mosaica (US), CFBT (UK), and GEMS (UAE). This move represents a breakthrough in the development of global schooling. To put in perspective how advanced the UAE activity is, imagine if Kansas City were to recruit French, Saudi, and Chinese entities to manage a group of its public schools!

The Mobile Global

In the early days of the rise of the American “domestically-oriented” corporation, executives were often assigned to multiple locations over the course of their careers. Four years in Cincinnati, five in Los Angeles, and several more in Raleigh . . . such career paths were

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common. Children of those executives typically attended a series of schools—more often than not, good suburban public schools in different locations. Though often upsetting for spouses and children, the “educational transition” was not that difficult. More or less, it was simply a matter of parents advising a public school that they would be enrolling their children there.

Flash now to a completely new level of educational trauma. Imagine for a moment that your New York-based company suggests that you should have experience in Europe and Asia in order to move up in the organization. This means relocating your three children from New York to Hong Kong to London, and then back to New York—say over a 12-year stretch. As a starter for your new educational adventure, unless your children speak fluent Mandarin, a Hong Kong public school is ruled out, which limits your alternatives to private institutions. You know none of them, but you quickly learn that a key initiative of the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong is the creation of new private schools because it is so difficult to get into the few that do exist. Indeed, a practice of some well-heeled companies is “reserving” seats, often at a price of *several hundred thousand dollars per seat*. Your company is not so well heeled, so you are left on your own first to determine whether the Chinese International School, Concordia, or Hong Kong International School is right for your child—and then to figure out how to get your child in! If you are lucky enough to solve that problem, you can anticipate doing it again in London in a few years and then once again back in New York, where your old school long ago “sold your seat.”

Does this picture make sense? To answer that, contrast it to another experience of mobile families. When you travel, more likely than not, you have a preferred hotel that you stay in, whether the high-end Four Seasons or more modest Sheraton. When you arrive at a hotel destination around the world, they know your name and your preferences, aid you in booking

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accommodations in your next city, and provide you with preferred rates and upgrades. Why shouldn't the same services and conveniences exist in something much more important, such as schooling?

English—More a Currency Than the Dollar or the Pound

Of the world's 6,900 languages, Mandarin is spoken by the largest number of people with roughly one billion speakers worldwide. Hindi, Spanish, and English are roughly tied as the world's second most spoken language, with each having approximately half a billion speakers. This situation is expected to change radically over the next two decades. Although the teaching of Mandarin and Spanish as second languages is on the rise, a report by the British Council projects that the number of people learning English will reach approximately two billion within the next 15 years, roughly 30% of the earth's population and over five times the number of native speakers of English.

Long the language of science, global business, and smaller global matters such as aviation, English will likely continue its emergence as the "world's language." The rise of English has already impacted educational institutions worldwide. Philip Altbach, director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, says "The nations using English, particularly the United States, have become the academic superpowers. Size and wealth matter a great deal in determining the academic pecking order. The United States alone spends almost half the world's R&D funds and is home to a large proportion of the top universities on the world's increasingly influential league tables. The English-speaking academic systems host more than half the world's international students." This hegemony will impact primary and secondary education as well. Schooling entities rooted in countries where English is the native language

will have an important competitive advantage—at least for awhile.

Prediction

What the above snapshots demonstrate is that consumers and governments worldwide are facing a “new kind of” educational demand versus that of 20 or 30 years ago, specifically:

- Parents in the East want to prepare their children for Western higher education;
- Parents in the West want to expose their children to cultures and economies that will play increasingly important roles in the coming century;
- Governments want to bring the educational resources of other cultures to their shores;
- Educational consumers desire brands, old and new, they can trust, and in education those tend to be Western ones;
- Mobile families desire seamless educational transitions.

As reliably as water *always* finds a way to flow downhill, *these new educational demands will be met*. However, legislatively-restrained, cottage-industry, domestically-oriented schools or school systems are not well positioned to do so.

Three new types of schooling institutions, the earliest versions of which we can already see examples, are likely to emerge:

1. Global private school companies, both of the brick-and-mortar and virtual form
2. Global providers of public schools or related public school services
3. Organizations that do both

Such schooling entities will provide parents and governments with the types of benefits noted above. Equally important, because of their scale-driven ability to invest in substantial

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R&D and lack of political constraints, they will play an important role in driving innovation in pedagogy.

Let's examine what these new institutions will be like, why they will be important to the educational landscape, and how they will change it.

Many Global Networks

Today's global traveler can choose from a variety of worldwide airlines—and receive in return various loyalty-driven perks. Over the past 50 years, British Airways, American, Continental, Delta, Emirates, and Singapore Air have aspired to serve the world with a global footprint of routes. Similarly, hotel companies such as America's Hyatt, Canada's Four Seasons, France's Sofitel, China's Mandarin or Peninsula, or Singapore's Raffles have established locations in most of the world's leading ports of call. And, as discussed above, a mall in Beijing or Dubai contains storefronts very similar to those in Berlin and Dallas.

The future world of schooling will have much in common with these players. Thirty years from now, imagine perhaps a dozen global systems of schools, giving parents a much wider array of options than those currently available. These new systems will have much in common, and yet they will offer wide variety as well. Parents will be able to choose from: different school designs (some schools will offer the I.B, while others will create designs from scratch); different price points (some will be premium priced, competing with top-tier schools, while others will provide education for the budget-conscious); different geographic strategies (some will focus on world capitals while others will locate in second- and third-tier cities); different funding sources (some will be private pay and some will be public, often recruited by government school systems to offer different choices to local educational consumers); and some

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will be for profit while others will be global NGO's. Their similarities may include operating under a global brand, having multiple campuses around the world that adhere to a particular school design or pedagogy, and being supported by a central infrastructure (think of them as global "school districts").

Fully-formed examples of such entities do not exist today, but there are both forerunners and early corporate examples that may well emerge into what is imagined here.

"Country-related" international schools can be found around the world. An example is the American School of London and the American School of Shanghai. Although these schools have common roots, often having grown up in the backyards of American embassies to serve American citizens abroad, they are not part of any real system or organization, and their pedagogy and curriculum vary. There is the International Baccalaureate, which is a common curriculum but not an actual "system of schools." Perhaps the closest parallel is the French Lycee. Though each campus operates with great independence, it does so under a common "brand," with a common curriculum, and under some supervision from a central office. It differs from the networks of the future in that it gives priority, though not exclusively so, to French citizens.

On the corporate side of the ledger, there are also several examples. Meritas, a U.S. company, is acquiring private schools around the world and now owns campuses from Mexico to Switzerland. Meritas functions as a "family of schools," with each school continuing to operate under its original name although as noted above, Meritas's College du Lemman has expanded from its Geneva campus to Chengdu, China. GEMS, a significant operator of private schools in the UAE, has expanded into India and England. Like Meritas, it functions more as a family of schools than a global brand, as do the schools of Nord Anglia and Cognita, both British concerns

that operate locally-branded international schools from Bratislava to Beijing.

The Social Importance of These Systems

The scale of these systems even twenty years from now will be tiny relative to the number of children in the world. Perhaps the largest systems will by that time have fifty to 200 campuses and serve from 100,000 to 200,000 students within the four walls of their particular campuses. Although that level of enrollment would be equivalent in size to one of the larger public school systems in the United States, the number is immaterial when you consider that India alone has nearly 400 million children under the age of 18.

These new institutions, however, may have an importance that extends far beyond those students they directly serve. When the history of education and education reform in the 21st century is examined, these new global systems of schools may well be highlighted as having played meaningful, even seminal roles. They could be: forerunners of the largest K-12 schooling companies, important R&D centers for new school designs, bridges of international understanding, and platforms or staging areas for global virtual schools of the future. Let's look at each of these.

Highly Positive R&D Environments

K-12 schooling companies began to emerge in a significant way in the early 1990's, mostly in the United States and mostly focused on the management of public schools, either as subcontractors to school systems or as managers of public charter schools. Most of these companies invested, some to a very significant degree, in the creation of "whole school designs." The work of such organizations (including KIPP, EdisonLearning, and others) has had an

important impact on public education in America. It has contributed directly to the education of hundreds of thousands of children within the schools these organizations created and/or managed, and it has indirectly enriched the conversation of school reform both in the U.S. and in other countries.

However, many who have participated in these efforts over the past two decades would agree that there has not been as much improvement in school design or academic performance as early reformers had anticipated. In no small way that is a result of the terrain upon which these pioneering organizations labored. The public schools they were asked to manage were provided relatively low per-pupil spending, including charter schools that often received per-pupil funding materially lower than peer public schools. Often companies and organizations were assigned management of the most dysfunctional schools in a city. In virtually all cases, there were significant political, legislative, and bargaining agreement constraints. And these reform organizations frequently operated in environments of intense political controversy. That none of these organizations were operating in ideal settings for innovation or in highly controlled test conditions is an understatement. Instead, their efforts to create and implement new designs occurred under harsh, “battlefield-like” conditions. While this may have some benefits—working in a highly realistic environment being one of them—it stunted the development of innovative designs.

The new global schooling companies will, on the other hand, have multiple benefits which should result in design breakthroughs. First, international private schools typically enjoy a tuition level per pupil (some over \$30,000 per year) that is significantly greater than what early education companies received. These robust economics make allocations for research and development easier and provide a well-funded environment to conceive and execute innovative

techniques. (Once educational effectiveness is demonstrated, the focus can shift to the development of scalable economic models.) Second, international schools are typically exempted from local, “domestic” educational regulations, operating effectively in regulation-free zones, like duty-free shops at airports. In many respects they can be thought of as “global charters,” but even better since charters are often burdened with local educational regulations. Third, the fact that these new schooling companies will have direct visibility into schooling in the world’s leading cultures will inform and improve their educational designs, making them a synthesis of excellent pedagogy worldwide versus that of a single educational setting.

These new enterprises will give rise to new areas of emphasis in school designs. Of paramount importance will be an increasing focus on the acquisition of a second and third language. Given the rise of English mentioned earlier, some may ask, “Why do students need a second language when the entire world is learning English?” The answer: learning a second language is important beyond its utility. It provides a deeper understanding of other cultures. Moreover, it is a demonstration of respect and a good defense against a certain arrogance which can creep into any highly successful or dominant culture. Measured as a whole, the language programs of even America’s finest schools lag far behind their international counterparts. Long plagued by approaches that focused on coverage such as “two years of Spanish” or “three years of French,” American students have failed to achieve what matters most: real fluency. New global schooling companies will commit to true fluency as an academic outcome and will design their programs accordingly, including launching language instruction in the earliest grades, committing to excellence in one or two languages (versus offering a wide but shallow variety of choices), employing immersion techniques, and out-sourcing language to highly skilled providers often used by companies and governments.

A central feature of these new designs will be ensuring that each student graduates with a “world view.” These new programs will feature larger helpings of world history and world geography. They will strive to provide their graduates with a greater working knowledge of the world’s leading countries and their cultures. “Domestic” schools understandably skew their social studies curriculum to their locale and country. New designs will continue to provide an appropriate level of focus on the host country, but the balance will shift, insuring that graduates are more grounded in world matters. These schools will be ideal settings for world issues courses such as those now found in the International Baccalaureate program that cover topics crossing national boundaries such as conflict and violence, world poverty, and environmental concerns.

Because their network of campuses around the world will be supportive, international exchange programs will be taken to another level in both the number and frequency of opportunities provided. Students will be encouraged to spend time on multiple campuses and continents within the network and will be able to do so without disrupting a clearly articulated curriculum, as these new schooling companies will use one core curriculum worldwide. Far from interrupting the normal flow of a curriculum, these new times abroad will actually enhance instruction. Imagine over the course of middle and high school a student spending time on four or five continents. Well-planned experiences that include both pre-travel prep time and post-travel debriefing will become a dramatic extension of the concept of “teachable moments.” A three-month stint in China will ensure that a student cares more about Chinese history, both before and after the trip. A student who spends time in Mexico will take his or her Spanish a bit more seriously before and after the trip.

Finally, these new designs will necessarily push the boundaries of how technology is utilized in instruction, in professional development, and in system-to-school and school-to-school communications. Often separated by thousands of miles, these campuses will communicate with their HQ in advanced technological ways. Well-designed video conferencing will be standard fare. On-line courses will stretch across the system—and be enhanced by certain “centers of excellence” that feed the entire network of schools. For example, a U.S.-based school within the network will be the natural staging area or bureau for U.S. history for the entire worldwide system, as will a China-based school for Chinese history. In-school social networks will take on new meaning with students communicating from across the globe about their courses and their experiences, often after they have met one another during extended exchange programs.

The New Melting Pots

Atlantic College, a United World College campus in Wales that serves 350 students at the junior and senior high school level, typically admits each year 170 students from over 75 countries. It is not unusual for major international schools to host students from over 100 countries on one campus. Though this degree of cultural diversity can be found in some public schools around the world, it is certainly not the norm, and particularly not so outside of large internationally-oriented cities.

As global systems of schools spring up, they will expand and accelerate the growth of an already established practice in leading international schools: cultural interaction. At Atlantic College four-student dorm rooms are occupied by students from four different countries. During evening events students “present” their countries to the student body. Programs such as these

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encourage greater understanding and tolerance, as well as increase a student's knowledge regarding various parts of the world. In global systems of the future, this will happen not only among students, but also with the school staff. These new schools will encourage their faculty members to teach in multiple locations throughout the system.

The First Major K-12 Schooling Companies

As any Wall Street investment banker knows, education is a hot category that outperformed virtually all segments of the U.S. stock market during the recent financial crisis. On the world level, the education sector is huge—second only to healthcare. Education is growing both in the total number of students and in the amount of money countries apply to it. And, it is non-cyclical.

In terms of market value, today's education sector is dominated by post-secondary companies such as Education Management, The University of Phoenix, Devry, and Corinthian Colleges. In the United States alone, more than half a dozen post-secondary companies sport market values of \$2 to \$10 billion. Conspicuously absent from the list of high-value education stocks are K-12 schooling companies. Although there are K-12 schooling entities with hundreds of millions in revenues (including K-12, the virtual schooling company, and EdisonLearning), the K-12 sector has yet to keep up with its post-secondary counterpart.

That may be changing soon—and in two ways. First, governments (such as the UAE, as noted above) will increasingly reach out to Western-based K-12 companies to import designs and best practices for their public school systems. This should drive revenues and market capitalizations of the private managers of public schools in the decades ahead. Second, as demand for English-speaking schools continues to rise around the world (with hundreds of

thousands of additional seats added in English-speaking international schools in just the past decade), the new global networks of private, international schools will become financially important entities. As an indication of potential scale, the International School of Geneva is an enterprise with three campuses enrolling four thousand students at a per-student tuition of up to \$25,000. Imagine a company with a network of 20 or so of those types of sites around the world.

The importance of the emergence of such entities goes far beyond shareholder reward. As noted above, these new entities will be important funders of research and development—and, equally important, of *scalable* research and development. It is one thing to “study a problem” or “create a new technique.” It is quite another to think about how to bring it to life with tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of students.

Platforms for Global Virtual Schools

A study by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences estimates that worldwide 323 million school-age children are not in school. For perspective, that means the equivalent of six times the total number of school-age children in the United States *are not in school*. Though multiple factors contribute to this alarming statistic, a leading cause is that the cost of providing a traditional, in-school, brick-and-mortar education is simply too great for some undeveloped countries to bear. Even India, a booming economy, is a case in point. In 2007, UNESCO said India’s central government spending on higher education was only \$400 per pupil in contrast to \$9,600 in the United States.

One solution to this educational crisis is for undeveloped countries to “skip” the brick-and-mortar era of education and move directly to virtual, on-line delivery—just as some

countries that were unable to develop the costly infrastructure required in the land-line-only era of telecommunications moved directly to the cellular world.

The new systems and networks of global schools will be uniquely positioned to provide these new virtual schools. First, parents are attracted to virtual schools that are associated with or spring from brick-and-mortar institutions. Some of the largest and most successful on-line, post-secondary educational institutions in the United States were first physical campuses, the University of Phoenix being the most notable. Second, schooling companies that have a brick-and-mortar site have a substantial “sunk cost”—faculty in place—that can be “exported” to the virtual world. A terrific third-grade math teacher can be “broadcast” to thousands upon thousands of students beyond her 18-student classroom. And her students play an important role, too. Like live studio audiences, they inspire their teacher to do her best work both for them and for their on-line counterparts. Third, brick-and-mortar educational institutions can serve as the administrative and creative hearts of these new virtual entities. Finally, a global system of brick-and-mortar campuses is much more important than, say, one individual campus. Each campus will contribute something special to a global virtual school, similar to the way an individual computer contributes to a “cloud” of computer capability.

Conclusion

Counter-intuitively, domestic schools may be the greatest beneficiary of the rise of global schools and particularly of global, private schooling entities. These new entities will be excellent models to follow.

Located initially in the world's largest, most international cities that typically house the media nerve-centers of all countries, global schooling entities will be widely reported upon and will thus inspire many to follow their lead.

Pressed by parents and students demanding a more modern and worldly education, global schools will jump beyond parochial, country-oriented views, becoming important forces in showing schools how to bring cultures together.

Inspired by best practices they will see from all parts of the world, global schools will have the opportunity to incorporate elements from around the world into school designs of the future.

Anchored by brick-and-mortar campuses around the globe, these entities will spawn country-specific virtual schools soon to be followed by global ones. Similar to worldwide news entities, their campuses will act as "educational bureaus" feeding and enriching their own networks first and then surrounding public schools.

Freed of difficult political constraints, they will be able to focus on the exploration of innovative techniques of teaching and learning and the development of new curriculum.

And fueled by higher per-pupil revenues, these new global entities will have the resources to invest in research and development. The breakthroughs made by global schools and global, private schooling entities will flow, sometimes freely and sometimes at a cost, to their domestic counterparts. Local schools will be able to use the examples of these new strategies as wedges to lift or improve legislation that restrains them from progress. While students in global schooling entities will certainly benefit from their services, it is clear that such institutions will have a widespread impact on the entire educational community.