

# THE ROAD TO **PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

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\* The raison d'être of the International Alliance of Leading Education Institutes (IALEI) is not only to provide leadership for educational development around the globe and raise the public profile of education, but also to make recommendations to policy makers regarding critical issues that impact education policy and practice. For the same reason **knowledge mobilisation** – that is the translation of knowledge into service for the common good – is important to IALEI, as it is to educational institutions around the world.

The focus on sharing and use of research knowledge is not completely new. There has been some use of the term knowledge mobilisation to reposition the university as a central institution in the 'knowledge-based economy'. As well, knowledge mobilisation is often linked to innovation and economic development, and is used to discuss highly marketable knowledge areas such as biotechnology. Thus, in many fields, expressions such as 'evidence-based practice' have become exceedingly popular.

Professionals, practitioners as well as policy makers in many countries have recognised the importance and value of knowledge creation and mobilisation in education. The use of new knowledge and its uptake in education policy and practice can have a huge impact on the quality of teaching and learning in schools, and we also know from research that a high-quality education can have many positive effects on children, families, communities and societies. Therefore, the knowledge-based economy calls for outward-oriented universities, an effective system of local, national and international institutions and infrastructure that supports knowledge creation and mobilisation.

However, there is still room to create more productive partnerships between research, policy and practice. That is why IALEI raised the question of knowledge mobilisation – an extremely important educational issue with a substantive international relevance – at its annual meeting and research conference in Toronto in June 2011. To build effective practices for mobilising research knowledge in education, IALEI's recommendations point to two possible solutions.

First, faculties of education should be proactive and strategic in communicating and disseminating

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knowledge they produce and advocating the importance and value of research and its application in practice. This will allow them to make a strong case to governments and the broader education community about the importance of research, knowledge creation and mobilisation. This includes not only research funding and greater use of research synthesis, but also more effective organisation of research and targeted outreach that includes more efficient use of websites and other communication tools to promote and mobilise research knowledge.

Second, universities need to create strategic networks, partnerships and alliances with ministries of education, professional organisations and associations, school districts and educational institutions and leaders at home and around the world. This will allow them not only to communicate and disseminate research knowledge more effectively, but also to be at the forefront of its direct application in practice.

In sum, universities and governments need to work together to make a greater effort to advance research knowledge and its uptake in policy and practice in education. Otherwise, the risk is that knowledge mobilisation continues to rest solely on the shoulders of individual researchers. ■

