

What Does it Take to Become a High-Quality Research University? A Case Study from Nepal

Brown Bag Lunch at The World Bank Seminar Notes

The World Bank organized a Brown Bag Lunch – a hybrid seminar - at the World Bank Nepal Office, Kathmandu on February 23, 2023. Among the seminar participants were the World Bank staff in Nepal, Bangladesh and India, Madan Bhandari University of Science and Technology (MBUST) staff and other participants from Bangladesh and Qatar. The purpose of the seminar was to learn from the experience of MBUST what does it take to develop a high-quality research university.

The seminar started with a welcome note from Mohan Aryal, Senior Operation Officer of the World Bank. Lada Strelkova, Operational Manager (Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka) highlighted the role of the World Bank in development of higher education in Nepal. Prof. Rajendra Dhoj Joshi, President of MBUST made a presentation on the experience of MBUST, vision of MBUST and challenges of attaining the vision. He underscored that MBUST represents a unique opportunity for transformation of higher education in Nepal and elsewhere. He stressed the importance of rallying the support from all stakeholders including the World Bank for successful implementation of the concept of MBUST.

Prof. Dr. Zafar Iqbal a discussant from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh hailed the initiative to develop a world-class university in Nepal and provided valuable suggestions for the development of MBUST. Prof. Yasmeen Haque from the same university shared her experience of research in the area of cancer diagnostic tools providing insights into development of research laboratories.

Prof. Nanda Bahadur Singh, Vice Chancellor of Mid-Western University (MWU), Nepal - another discussant - highlighted the initiatives of MWU to transform the university. He also provided valuable comments for the development of MBUST.

Francisco Marmolejo (President of Higher Education at the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development) – another discussant - emphasized that the world-class university needs to meet the reality and aspirations of the local community. He indicated that the university should adopt a culture of openness and accountability in collaboration with national and international institutions.

Mr. Siddhartha Raja from the World Bank Nepal Office underlined the important of having faculty with excellent network for funding and research. Mr. Md. Mokhlesur Rehman from the World Bank Bangladesh Office indicated that building a World-Class University is a long journey and needs collaboration with the best universities in South Asia and elsewhere.

Nina Arnhold of the World Bank Delhi Office concluded the program suggesting that the university should work to attract good faculty and focus on the regional development.

At the end the MBUST President thanked the World Bank for providing an opportunity for sharing the experience of developing MBUST. He also expressed his appreciation to the World Bank and all participants for providing valuable suggestions and expressing their readiness to support the initiative of building a high-quality research university in Nepal.