



## **CGHE Annual Conference 22-23 May 2023** **Session Details**

### **KEYNOTE 1 (Double Keynote Session) - From Higher to Tertiary in Post-School Education: National and International Perspectives**

22 May 2023, 9:05am - 10:55am (UK)

*Chair: Chris Millward*

*Speakers: Alison Wolf, Ellen Hazelkorn*

#### **The Global and the Local: Will Tertiary Education for all be much the same, everywhere?**

*Speaker: Alison Wolf*

In recent decades, there has been an unprecedented explosion in post-secondary enrolments, largely but not entirely in universities. Growth in developing countries has been far faster than it ever was in the first wave of industrialising states. Alongside this, there has emerged a global market in higher education, also signalling a major break with the past. These international trends reflect common pressures and demands, including, on the one hand, the expectations of citizens (and voters), and on the other, fiscal challenges for governments in a challenging economic climate.

But do these common factors also mean that tertiary systems of education will all end up much the same? They need not, but governments should be much clearer about the choices they can make, within a shared policy envelope. In my talk I will spell out some of the alternative trajectories that future systems could follow, looking both at global trends over the past half-century and at a number of individual countries.

#### **Is it Time to Rethink Our Model of Post-Secondary Education? Progressing a Tertiary Education Eco-System**

*Speaker: Ellen Hazelkorn*

Near universal participation in higher education has been a huge achievement for OECD countries. Yet, globalization and geopolitical shifts, an ageing population, the technological and digital revolutions leading to increasing use of automation and AI, and strategies for sustainable green and blue economy – alongside changes arising from the Covid-19 pandemic – are reshaping our societies, how and where we live and the world of work.

Despite these developments and macro-trends, the model of educational provision has remained relatively unchanged as if it was still a system catering to a small elite. Attention is drawn to learners gradually being “left behind” by the current system and/or unable to

access the system in any meaningful/sustained way. This has consequences for social cohesion and political participation.

By 2030, higher skills will constitute more than 40% of the required skills mix, but almost 45% of jobs will require medium level skills – those which require some postsecondary education and training, but less than a four-year college degree. As the population ages, people will require upskilling, re-skilling or repurposing their qualification in response to changes in the labour market – or their own personal life choices. Universities have been too slow to adapt and VET colleges have often been stymied by social-cultural and policy factors and considerably less funding and resources.

Much more radical thinking is required as to how we structure, govern, fund and deliver post-secondary/post-compulsory education. This is driving many countries to reframe the policy discussion around the tertiary education eco-system, inclusive of formal, non-formal, “second-chance” and life-long learning opportunities. But, beyond the headlines what do we mean by tertiary education? What do we want to achieve?

In my talk, I will look at factors driving change across our societies and education systems and at policy discussions from an international perspective. Finally, I will consider what a tertiary education eco-system might look like and reflect on some implications for our universities and FE/VET colleges.