

Much is made of the deep historical and cultural ties between India and the UK and how these should underpin the contemporary trading relationship. I sometimes fear that at times this could be the cause for complacency, a sense that things will fall into place without the active commitment from people and organisations from both sides. The real challenge is to mould a new relationship. One fit for the rigours of the 21<sup>st</sup> century international business environment, and which forges a new dynamic between two countries steeped in history. An ongoing partnership in education and skills should be the glue that binds us together and defines a future based on reciprocity and mutual success.

The higher education communities in India and the UK have deep and longstanding ties based on innovation and research imperatives. Indian students have long travelled to the UK to study and long may this continue. However, I would like to point out one or two emerging trends which I think are worthy of note.

Indian Universities and colleges are establishing a presence in the UK. One organisation at the vanguard of this trend is Amity University, which has a campus in London and a joint programme taught in New Delhi with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors on urban planning and land economics. Joint accreditation will become increasingly sought after as students seek internationally recognised qualifications.

Secondly, Universities are exploring innovative commercial collaboration models. The Hero Group of India are working with London based Imperial College and the new BML Munjal University will take its first batch of students next year. Other business schools are enthusiastic too, planning to meet Indian demand by taking their executive programmes to the students and delivering in India. Given the visa restrictions on post University work, many business schools are seeking to build links with Indian employers to secure placement opportunities.

We have identified a surge in interest among British students for an Indian learning experience. We were delighted to support a UKIERI funded Study India programme this summer which attracted 4000 applications for only 200 places. We will seek to consolidate this trend and are exploring ways of enhancing student placements for UK business school students in India. As the talent pool becomes increasingly global in nature and the balance of economic power shifts eastwards, we will only see an increase in demand for placements of this nature from our best and brightest.

Clearly the use of technology to deliver quality provision will be critical if India is able to disseminate education at scale. Online and blended learning models should therefore be a key consideration and the potential of MOOC's is gaining significant interest from the market. Indeed, the Open University online platform has a huge number of subscribers from India, testament to the central importance and demand for quality education in that country.

There are other sectors where the size of the market is greater, where the deals done will be of greater financial value. However, I see education and skills as the cornerstone on which the future relationship between India and the UK will be built. That is why the UKIBC continues to develop and expand our work in this sector, across FE, vocational training, leadership and management and higher and postgraduate education.

