

**Is a Ph.D dangerous? An
institutional take on what guides
professional development policy in
teacher education**

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- MIE 1973-2014?
 - Teacher education, Curriculum Development, Research
 - Governance and Financing
- Institutional realism: what should guide professional development ?
 - individual aspirations v/s institutional “solvency”.

The study

- Case Study of MIE, its professional development policy for staff , who are recruited primarily as teacher educators.
- To analyse the forces which have impacted on institutional **choice between a research led professional development programme (doctoral studies) and** one which is more **practice led**
- The **tensions inherent in reconciling this choice** with institutional mandate.

Methodology

- Institutional ethnography
 - textually mediated discourses to understand what guides the processes and practices in relation to professional development of teacher educators.

sources of data

- Staff development policies
- Director's Report to Council
- Budgets
- MoUs on the doctoral programmes
- Doctoral programme handbooks
- List of approved doctoral titles of candidates
- Reports on the conditions of service and salary structure of staff
Government of Mauritius Acts
- Strategic documents of the Ministry of Tertiary Education
- MIE Strategic Plan 2007-2015
- MIE Self Assessment Report 2007 and 2013
- Tertiary Education Commission Quality Audit Report for MIE

Ruling relation 1: Regulatory agents

- Public institutions serving the state mandate
- External Audit: Surveillance for public higher education - % of Ph Ds- Research & Pub
- Multiple expectations:
 - **higher education regulatory body** in terms of the high standards of research;
 - **Funding agency-** Government
 - **Stakeholders** whose varying needs and interest we serve

Ruling relation 2: Economic status of Teacher Educators @ MIE

- **Staff profile:** From **experienced practitioners** to more **highly qualified young graduates**
- **Attraction for teacher educators?**
- **Formal Staff development:**
 - **1999: Induction courses- MA Education, In-house**
 - investment for a period of four years on **doctoral studies.**

Ruling Relation 3: International Partnerships

University of Brighton

University of Kwazulu Natal

- **Partners:** Extension of their campus to affirm their “international” agenda
- However: hidden costs for MIE
- Priorities **may conflict**

Staff Development as enactment of the Institutional Research Agenda?

- **MIE Act** : MIE key instrument to push forward the agenda of **educational research & educational change** in line with the developmental targets of the country.
 - Institutes of Education set up in the **Eastern African** as an extension of the Ministries/ Departments of education which were concerned with **provision of academic technical advisory services** (Alladin, 1988)

Tensions

- **Doctoral studies-** largely **scholarly** rather than practical.
 - **Independence of view** nurtured by doctoral studies may be confronted with the **censure of state agents**

Practical concerns

- **Workload:** Adoption of doctoral programmes as a major institutional avenue for professional growth has foregrounded the necessity to devise and implement **a concurrent policy for management of workload**
- Ever growing portfolio for which a workload corollary is hard to agree upon.
- The question of **fairness** to both those **who are pursuing doctoral studies and those who are not**

Tensions

Institutional existence:

- serving the **agenda of the state** v/s **MIE operating** on the same lines **as a university** with all the attendant implications of scholarship and research, asserting one's academic identity

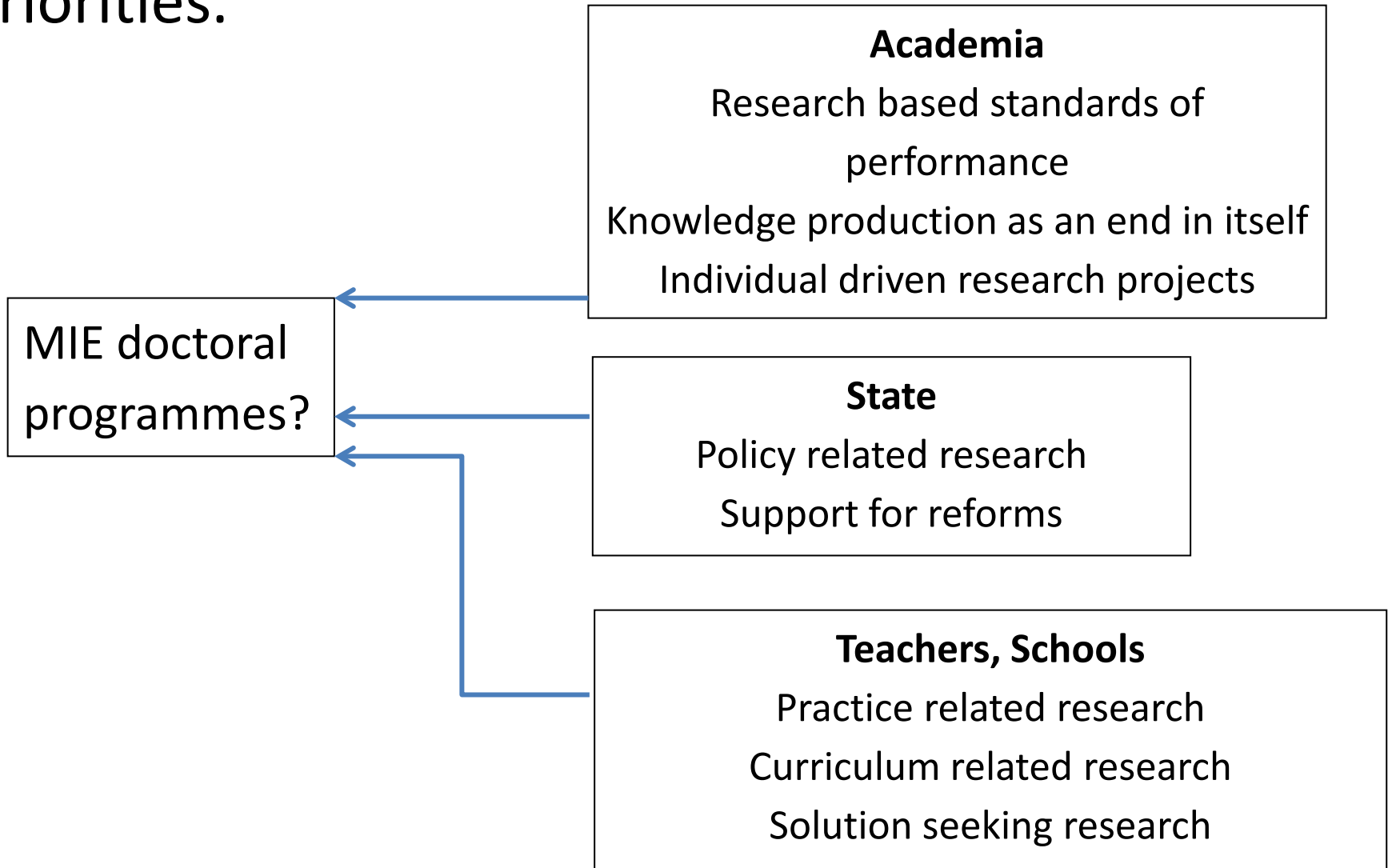
Pressure from the “lowlands” of Practice

- The **identity of the institute** is firmly linked to **teacher preparation** and education as revealed in its strategic goal of **transforming practices** at school level.
- Predominance of theories in its programmes (MIE, 2003).
- Policy decision was taken to infuse across programmes a more **significant element of school based experience**- (Professional Practice Seminars- Contextual Teaching and Learning)

**Lessons Learned- What Mauritius has
to say to other teacher education
faculties & institutions?**

Competing demands and priorities.

Forcefield of Higher Education



Professional development?

- Supporting the **transition from teacher to teacher educator** to assist in the development of professional identity (Swennen, Volnam, & Van Essen, 2008)
- Providing **opportunities for research, reflection** and inquiry (Robinson & McMillan, 2006)
- Developing an **institutional culture that links teaching practice to scholarship** and provides space for group interactions (Gallagher, Griffin, Parker, Kitchen, & Figg, 2011)
- Articulating a **knowledge of practice** constructed on awareness of oneself, pedagogy and students (Loughran & Berry, 2005) (John, 2002).

Guiding Principles:

The principle of diversity

- Complexities of the educational landscape necessitates **diversity of perspectives and research practices** to enrich understandings.
- **Faculty's engagement with the terrain** of the school- guarantee of sustainability and credibility with practitioners
- **Should Doctoral programmes be limited to the methodological orientations of the two partnering universities?**

- How faculties of education best serve the **interest of its “industry”**?
- How can the academics **“get their hands dirty”** in the lowlands of practice and engage in more **policy and practice based research**?

- If the main **consumers of academic publications** are the **academics themselves** what is the **real impact of all the investment** going into teacher education?
- If **teachers** and other education professionals are to become the **primary audience for research outcomes**, should research be carried out **with them or rather on them?**

The principle of equity

Fairness: ability to deal with:

- Pressure of **workload**
- Pursuit of **academic excellence**
- Meeting **funding agency's** and stakeholder's needs

The Principle of Balance

- need to be **research active on the three fronts of academia, policy and practice**
- produce innovative practices and research **outcomes which stakeholders will find useful and relevant**
- skills of **inquiry for the world of policy and practice v/s academic agenda**

Conclusion

- **Research universities** have held teachers and schools at arm's length but they may not be able to continue **justifying the huge research funding** that goes their way only on account of their publications and student outcomes
- Urgent demands for **inquiry based intervention** which would require **teacher educators to articulate a knowledge of practice constructed on awareness of self, pedagogy and students** which are not necessarily the attributes of the current doctoral programme.
- **Is PHD dangerous?**