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AFRICA-EUROPE CONFERENCE  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION COLLABORATION



THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP  
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## Conclusions & Recommendations

"BUILDING SKILLS AND  
CAPACITY IN THE NEXT  
GENERATION OF  
UNIVERSITY STAFF"

### Context of discussion

The speakers of the workshop "Building skills and capacity in the next generation of university staff" highlighted the current shortage of qualified academic staff and noted that the 'youth dividend' will present further challenges for the quantity and quality of university teaching academics. Currently, in many countries, PhD registrations are relatively low, and completion rates variable. There appears to be no shortage of research-oriented partnerships and award collaborations, but these are not filling the gaps in the number of teachers for the higher education sector. Speakers also noted that the population of skilled academics is ageing, reflecting concerns that academia is not seen positively enough as a career destination.

### Recommendations

Several practical steps were identified that could form part of a pan-African initiative to meet the need for more and better teaching academics. These include:

1. To invest in strengthening the quantity and quality of 'lead instructors' based on an expansion of the PEDAL model.
2. To establish communities of practice on Higher Education pedagogy, to share resources, develop ideas, and promote the value of teaching at the higher education level.
3. To utilise on-line learning more effectively not only to reach inaccessible geographies for learners but to share valuable teaching and learning resources.
4. To provide structural support for split-site PhD programmes.
5. To define essential values and attitudes that graduates should possess and build appropriate resources to support their inculcation in curriculum delivery.
6. To engage the Africa diaspora from other countries more directly in African Higher Education (e.g. by promoting Africa as a destination for completion of projects and theses).
7. To increase the pool of new graduate academics by seeking mechanisms of promoting the value of teaching, including assessment of teaching practice and appropriate career rewards for academic teaching staff.

## Issues raised

In discussions led by speaker presentations, several issues were raised, both to clarify the expected challenges and to offer recommended solutions.

It was noted that, whilst there are examples across Africa of successful interventions, these are not necessarily being adopted 'at scale'. There was general agreement that funding needs to be reassessed to provide support for growing key intervention success, even if this is at the expense of some other less impactful initiatives such as individual scholarship schemes.

The importance of collaboration with industry was highlighted, with speakers noting the current inconsistencies in collaboration, and the lost opportunities they saw in failing to engage industry in more than sponsoring research projects.

A key element of the discussion was to note that teachers need to build their pedagogic capabilities to generate employment producers, and not just successful employment consumers. As consumers, well qualified graduates may replace less skilled employees, but Africa more importantly needs graduates, who can generate employment opportunities through enterprise and creativity.

The role of education delivery in the 'hidden' curriculum was also expressed, focusing on values and attitudes as well as skills. These include tolerance, respect, persistence, creativity and cross-cultural understanding.

Attention was also given in the session to the need to re-prioritise teaching over research. Currently academics are internally rewarded for the scale of research (whilst in many cases the impact from that research may be variable). Academics are rarely promoted on the strength of their teaching ability, but this is recognised a key element of the success of the higher education sector in Africa.

The importance of pedagogic skill was also considered, noting that strong researchers don't necessarily make the strongest teachers.

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*Recommendations stem from a workshop that took place in the framework of the conference “**Investing in people, by investing in higher education and skills in Africa**”, organised by the European Commission, the African Union Commission, DAAD, British Council, Campus France and Nuffic on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in Brussels.*

*The following speakers have contributed to the debate:*

- *Dr Suleiman Ramon-Yusuf, Deputy Executive Secretary (Academics), National Universities Commission, Nigeria*
- *Dr Beatrice Muganda, Director of Higher Education, Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), Kenya*
- *Dr Jackson Too, Senior Assistant Commission Secretary, Commission for University Education, Kenya,*
- *Dr Damtew Teferra, Professor of Higher Education, University of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa*

Chair: Prof. Ernest Aryeetey, Secretary General, African Research Universities Alliance, Accra, Ghana  
Rapporteur: John Bramwell, Senior Higher Education Advisor (Systems Reform), British Council

Presentations and further reading on the topic of refugee integration in higher education are accessible on the [conference website](#).

