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AFRICA-EUROPE CONFERENCE
ON HIGHER EDUCATION COLLABORATION



THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP
LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE



Conclusions & Recommendations

"HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
AS JOB GENERATORS - MATCHING
SKILLS WITH LABOUR
MARKET REQUIREMENTS"

Introduction

The workshop "Higher education institutions as job generators – matching skills with labour market requirements" in the context of the conference "[Investing in people, by investing in higher education and skills in Africa](#)" discussed the professional integration of graduates from higher education institutions in Africa, and how entrepreneurial education and public-private partnerships can foster economic development. It addressed the following questions/issues:

- How can higher education institutions in Europe and Africa support entrepreneurship for young graduates and alumni?
- How to create stronger linkages between higher education institutions and the private sector in Africa;
- Results of initiatives implemented so far, including by EU-funded programmes.

Conclusions and recommendations

Three key points emerged during the discussion:

- Employability is a challenge, not only for Africa but across the whole world. It therefore calls for shared solutions;
- Africa's demographic trends are a challenge, but also an opportunity for training the local work force;
- Raising parents' awareness on gender equality issues to boost girls' participation in technical education is of key importance.

Recommendations:

- Cooperation with the private sector should be an integral part of Higher Education Institutions' strategy and vision and consider gender issues and sustainability.
- The development of study programmes should consider labour market requirements. This can be supported by encouraging cooperation between European and African higher education institutions and bringing together public and private partners.
- The creation of business start-ups by young graduates should be facilitated by supporting initiatives and networking of higher education institutions and stakeholders in Europe and Africa that are active in the field of entrepreneurship.
- Partnerships and projects between European and African HEIs that address professional integration should be supported.

Contributions from the workshop speakers

- Mady Koanda outlined the concept for **training “entrepreneur-engineers”** developed by the [2iE](#) higher education and research institution. The concept involves the provision of a **tailor-made mix of engineering and business skills**, as well as general skills such as creativity and project management, aimed at **fostering an entrepreneurial mind-set**. 2iE promotes **the participation of potential “entrepreneur-engineers” in international competitions** and provides pre-incubation (business plan development) and start-up (legal, financial and business) support to selected candidates. A few start-ups with a focus on sustainable development activities are located on the 2iE campus.

- Jean Luc Ramamonjiarisoa presented the innovative [Malagasy Fund for Vocational Training](#), which targets **in-service training and up-skilling** (notably in ICT) **for the workforce but also VET for young graduate jobseekers**. The Fund is based on a **private-public partnership** involving a compulsory employers’ contribution equal to 1% of the total wage bill, **which contributes to create ownership and strengthen a “training culture” among companies**. The Fund also promotes VET for small and micro companies, startups and other non-formal businesses, as well as training for trainers.

- Bertrand Commelin described two initiatives to support capacity building of higher education institutions in Africa and promote the employability of graduates:

- the [“France-Senegal Campus”](#), established following an agreement between the Presidents of Senegal and of France, to enhance the training offer of higher education institutions and promote learning mobility in Senegal. The initiative is not a HEI but an open service platform involving about 20 HEIs from both Senegal and France and covering initial and continuous VET, teacher training, research and **innovation pedagogy**. Its activities involve local businesses and can involve incubators of bilateral cooperation projects, joint diplomas, testing the validation of learning outcomes acquired in informal settings, certification, as well as helping the government **to formalise the legislation on recognition**;

- the [AFREQEN](#) project, whose aim is **to improve the quality of training** on renewable energies in West Africa and Maghreb **through VET, teacher training and skills development**. The project, co-financed by the EU through Erasmus+, involves **the mapping of needs, the development and testing of modules, e-learning, practical experience**, and will develop a platform for quality expertise. It involves 24 partners (including 10 EU HEIs), 9 countries, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, and one NGO.

- Siny Samba, co-founder of [“Le Lionceau”](#), a business which manufactures baby food produced with locally grown products, summarised her learning path in Senegal and in France, which involved **both technical and entrepreneurship training** and the **support of programmes** such as [MEETAfrica](#) (financed by the EU through the Panafrican Fund). She presented her activity - involving partners in Senegal and in France – showing how it **impacts the whole value chain through an inclusive approach**: improving the techniques of the farmers whose produce must comply with the quality requirements of the processing industry, promoting green and sustainable practices (e.g. waste recycling) and raising the awareness of the

consumers - i.e. the parents - of the importance of healthy nutrition for children. Ms Samba concluded by pointing at **the gap between the significant business opportunities existing in Africa and a critical shortage of skilled human resources.**

- Jean Michel Nicolle, as the President of the “Africa” Commission of the Campus France Forum, presented a general overview of higher education cooperation led by French HEIs and outlined a number of sustainable cooperation and co-development initiatives involving public HEIs and private stakeholders in the Maghreb area as well as in French-speaking and English-speaking Sub-Saharan Africa. These initiatives, implemented in two campuses located in Senegal and in the Ivory Coast, are placed under the aegis of the French President and reflect a continental vision. Mr Nicolle advocated **a stronger cooperation between HEIs and private stakeholders**, in vocational education and training (VET), and stressed **the importance of joint research projects and development aid**, while bearing in mind the cost implications of different economic models. He emphasised the importance of soft skills, **the need to enhance the validation of learning outcomes acquired in informal settings as well as women’s access to STEM and sustainable development competences.** Finally, he pointed at the current unbalanced student mobility flows, which feature a comparatively high proportion of African students going to France, while the share of French students going to Africa is too low and should be increased.

- Henriette Geiger stressed **the need to massify good practice in the areas of VET, pre-employment training, business incubators and institutional capacity building.** She stated that higher education helps to find and create qualified jobs, but **the gender dimension is not sufficiently addressed** in this context and **full access to all HE programmes for women should be ensured.** By adopting the [Africa-EU alliance](#) for sustainable investment and jobs, EU leaders have strongly recognised the role of education and training in creating growth and inclusive societies. The EU supports SDG4 in a lifelong learning perspective, in particular through schemes such as Erasmus+ and Edu-Link, as well as research and innovation programmes. 167 million euros, plus additional 17,6 million for Africa-EU student exchanges, are available for bilateral programmes. Despite proposed budget increases, however, this is a only drop in the ocean, and **digital technologies will need to help to massify exchanges** for those who cannot travel.

Cooperation between HE and the private sector is welcome, but **governments should reflect on where potential added value lies and reorient HE and VET accordingly.** In addition to Masters or PhDs, **there is a need for short learning modules allowing people to work and study and add academic qualifications to their professional ones**, as well as for dual programmes with a stronger VET approach. The fact that nowadays people can work anywhere in the world thanks to the internet is a huge opportunity for Africa. However, domestic resource mobilisation is key: **tax systems must function properly and countries should not depend on ODA.**

Ms Geiger concluded by pointing out that higher education is key for the EU; however, if people do not have access to basic education, they will never make it to higher education. This is why the EU will keep funding the quantitative and qualitative development of basic education, in particular in Least Developed Countries.

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 25th October 2019 in Brussels.

The following speakers have contributed to the debate:

- Mady Koanda, General Manager, 2iE, Burkina Faso
- Jean-Luc Ramamonjisoa, Chief Executive Officer, Malagasy Fund for Professional Training, Madagascar
- Bertrand Commelin, Director of European and International Development, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (Cnam), France
- Siny Samba, Co-founder of the company “Le Lionceau”, Dakar, Senegal
- Jean Michel Nicolle, President of the “Africa” Commission of the Campus France Forum, Director of the Graduate School of Engineering (EPF), Vice-President of the Conference of Deans of French Schools of Engineering (CDEFI), France
- Henriette Geiger, Director “People and Peace”, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission

Chair: Prof. Nouredine Manamanni, Director of External and Institutional Relations Department, Campus France

Rapporteur: Fiorella Perotto, Senior expert, Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission

Presentations and further reading on the topic are accessible on the [conference website](#).

