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ON HIGHER EDUCATION COLLABORATION



THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP  
LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE



## Conclusions & Recommendations

"THE ROLE OF HIGHER AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS  
- THE CASE OF AGRI-FOOD TRANSFORMATION"

### Introduction

Agriculture remains a critical component of livelihoods in Africa. Engaging youth in agricultural education and training is key to accelerating sustainable growth. Agri-food is a prime example of a sector where learnability and employability meet.

This session highlighted best practices of institutional collaboration between Africa and Europe in the agri-food sector. A panel of academics, policy makers and experts explored how higher education institutions can play a role in engaging young people in the sector as well as contribute to improving the quality and demand for vocational education.

### Conclusions & recommendations

#### 1. Increase Collaboration between Universities and TVET institutions

Higher education and TVET contribute to value addition in agri-food systems through knowledge and training input and dissemination of innovations. It will require programmes that support integrated and collaborative learning since many stakeholders work along the value chains with different capabilities and skills requirements. To accelerate the agri-food transformation at different levels:

- Improve linkages between Universities and Vocational Training institutes to address the needs of the agricultural sector in a comprehensive way aligning the different skills, education and research programmes.
- Target teacher training in agricultural education and continuously improve the knowledge and skills of agri-teachers (pre- and in-service) including key attributes required to enhance graduate employability and entrepreneurship.
- Expand the focus to off farm business opportunities including input development and post harvesting services and products.
- Support intersectoral involvement of political and educational stakeholders (Agriculture, Education and Science, Health, Environment, Labour etc.).

#### 2. Involve the private sector and agri-food industry

The growth of Africa is pegged on how the private sector and agri-food industry will evolve. African Universities should accommodate this growth by aligning research to youth employment strategies and industry development needs. Key insights:

- Include the right linkages between knowledge institutions, the private sector, government and civil society organisations in local communities to ensure sustainability (Dutch Diamond approach).

Teachers and lecturers are not always fully equipped and knowledgeable to address private sector needs.

- Concrete examples include: involving private sector stakeholders in management boards of education institutions, arranging internships placements for students, developing entrepreneurship skills and encouraging start-up incubators within education institutions.
- Reform TVET curricula to change the traditional 'production orientation' and include different skill sets including commercial aspects and market orientation.
- Make the agri-food sector attractive for youth by providing information and support for careers in business initiatives along the entire value chain.
- Agricultural companies and local industry work in very competitive markets and hardly have time and resources for pilot testing. Applied research universities with very close connections to industry could play this part.
- 'Be fit for the future': consider employment factors and prepare for jobs that do not exist right now. Knowledge institutions should look beyond the short term.
- European universities could expose African universities and TVET institutions to new technology and innovations (also in teacher education, pedagogy, labour market responsive and problem solving approaches, training methods and methodologies) through partnerships with a clear strategy to genuinely transfer and adapt those innovations to local contexts.

### **3. Recommendations for the design of development programmes**

- To stimulate local knowledge development and enhance sustainability it is paramount that knowledge institutions in developing countries will be positioned 'in the driver's seat'. The mindset should be to emphasize the creation of local solutions, also for scholarship programmes in Europe. It requires that African institutions play a stronger role as lead applicants. Apart from external funding it is also key that African governments allocate more national budget towards investments in Agri-food education and research. The EU has to stimulate African governments to invest more.
- Agri-food development should also contribute to a positive impact on climate change, environmental issues, water management challenges and social development indicators. This determines again the effectiveness of food security support ("how to produce the right crops at the right time for the right people").
- The organizing co-partners DAAD, Campus France, British Council and Nuffic should intensify the sharing of experiences, alignment and coordination of efforts and improve an efficient use of support instruments and resources.

### **4. Intra-Africa mobility**

- One big challenge on mobility in Africa is still credit transfer from one university to the other but also mobility from one region to the other. For instance, students moving from Nigeria to Namibia and from Namibia to Ethiopia may suffer from the visa application procedures which in many cases can be a little bit complex.
- Intra-Africa collaboration for capacity development leads to cross-fertilization of knowledge. The impact of programmes that include both Africa-Europe as well as Intra-Africa collaboration is potentially higher than programmes without an Intra-Africa exchange component.

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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:

- Hashi Abdullahi, Senior Policy Coordinator, International Green Growth department, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
- Dr. Valérie Baduel, Deputy Director General for Higher Education and Research, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, France
- Prof.dr.ir. Enoch G. Achigan Dako of the University of Abomey-Calavi and Programme Coordinator, "Enhancing training and research mobility for novel crops breeding in Africa" (MoBreed, funded by the EU Intra-Africa Mobility Scheme), Benin.
- Marianne van Dorp, Manager Business Development, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research, Netherlands
- Prof. Daniel Sila, Associate Professor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya. Prof. Sila was involved in the Nuffic-funded INNOFOOD programme focused on stimulating market-driven research & development in food processing in Kenya and Ghana

Chair :Mervin Bakker, Director, Nuffic South Africa

Rapporteur: Armand Gaikema, Programme Manager for Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Nuffic

Presentations and further information are accessible on the [conference website](#)

