



Prospects and Challenges of International Academic Exchange Programmes between Universities in Northern and Southern Countries

Reflections from a Visiting Scholar from an African University

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This article examined prospects and challenges of International Academic Exchange Programmes (IAEP) between selected universities in Northern and Southern countries. More specifically, the article examined various issues including major reasons for establishing IAEP, processes and procedures involved, advantages and disadvantages as well as major problems and challenges. In addition, the article presents gender issues of concern as well as key lessons and best practices. The article used data available from both secondary and primary sources of data including own personal experience from participating in more than six different forms IAEP for a period of ten years. The article concluded by providing recommendations for strengthening IAEP especially for universities in southern countries.

As a starting point, it is pertinent to indicate that for many decades most universities in northern countries have established various international academic exchange programs (IAEP) involving staff and students with their counterparts in universities in southern countries, including those in Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. Thus, this article, in addition to discussing general reflections from staff and students experiences, it presents author's own reflections from participating in several international academic exchange programmes between universities in Europe, America, Canada and Africa as a visiting scholar. Hatcher and Bringle (1977) define reflections as "the intentional consideration of an experience in light of particular learning objectives." In the context of this study therefore, reflections are used to refer to views and ideas of actors involved concerning own attitudes and perceptions towards IAEP. Generally, reflections offer space for actors involved to critically considering both positive and negative issues emerging from participating in various IAEP available in universities located in northern and southern countries respectively.

This article begins by presenting an overview IAEP including history and practical examples. In its second section, the article presents most common forms of international academic exchange programmes. Included in this sub-section is information on processes and procedures used by most universities especially those in the northern countries to establish IAEP with universities in southern countries. In its third section, the article presents and discusses major problems and challenges staff and students encounter at different stages of IAEP implementation. In its fourth section, the article presents major lessons emerging from the implementation of various academic exchange programs both within and across universities in northern and southern countries. In this sub-section, the article includes a discussion on the gender dimensions of IAEPs. Finally, in the last section, the article presents future prospects for strengthening IAEPs between and across universities in northern and southern

countries including calling for thorough empirical research to provide evidence based facts for influencing policy changes. In particular, the article argues that in the future, concrete measures should be taken to ensure reciprocity and mutual collaboration among participating universities. This implies that respective universities in the northern countries should consider engaging fellow staff and students from universities in southern in all phases of establishing IAEPs including the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. To date, the rapid expansion of information and communication technologies (ICTs), globalization and commercialization of knowledge offers lots of opportunities for enhancement of IAEPs among universities worldwide. However, most universities in southern countries ought to be more aggressive in this regard.

An overview on International Academic Exchange Programmes

Abundant literature is available in most universities websites particularly in northern countries showing different types of IAEP that exists worldwide. For instance, the Office of International Affairs at Western Ohio State University (WOU) has maintained academic relationships with more than 100 strong and vibrant study abroad programs in more than 40 countries worldwide over the past two decades¹. In particular, nearly 20 percent of undergraduate students at Western Ohio State University have directly benefitted from such programs. Likewise, at Ohio State University both foreign and local students have had opportunities to study abroad, including business-related studies in France, Spanish studies in South America, field research in Iceland, student internship programs in Switzerland and volunteering work in Honduras. Further, since 2008, approximately 65 percent of third year undergraduate students at Queen's University in

¹ <http://www.owu.edu/> viewed in July 2011

Kingston have participated in various study abroad programs offered by universities both in northern and southern countries².

Likewise, since the 1990s, the Douglas College International Programs and Exchanges in the United States of America (USA) has supported more than 1,000 students from over 60 worldwide to participate in various overseas programs such as teaching, academic research projects, cultural exchanges and attending high profile international symposia³. In particular, this program targets diverse actors from the Douglas community including faculty members, students, College Board members and administrators. For instance, available records show that every year approximately 500 international students enrol in academic and professional courses available at Douglas College. However, the majority of these foreign students come from China, Thailand, Japan and other Asian countries.

Likewise, since the early 1950's, most universities in European countries have been implementing different types of IAEPs with universities in northern and southern countries. For instance, in 2009/10, a total number 405,805 (slightly more than 16 per cent) were enrolled for various overseas courses outside the United Kingdom (UK) whereas about 2,493,415 students were enrolled on degree programmes at UK HEIs. The latter comprised of students from more than 200 countries including China and India supplying the largest proportion, followed by Nigeria, the United States, Malaysia, and a number of EU countries⁴. Likewise, since the 1980's, approximately 540 students from University of Turku from Finland have been participating in various IAEPs, particularly short term academic exchange programs lasting for a minimum of three months.⁵ Likewise, between the years 2010-2012, the School of Business at Car-

² <http://www.queens.ca/learn/programs>. Accessed in July 2011

³ See: www.douglascollege.ca/.../douglas/International-std. Accessed in July 2011

⁴ See A Guide to UK Higher Education and Partnerships for Overseas Universities - p. 6 Accessed in September, 2014

⁵ See: http://www.utu.fi/en/studying/studies/information_guide/exchange.html. Accessed in July 2011.

leton University in Ottawa introduced a one-year compulsory study abroad program for its third year undergraduate students enrolled in the International Business Program (IBP). Similarly, most universities in Asian countries have established IAEP and other academic networks with other universities both within and outside the region. In Australia, for instance, the University of New South Wales manages various IAEPs with more than 200 universities in 32 countries in Asia, North and South America and Europe.⁶

Interestingly, although international academic exchange programs plays a profound role in enhancing the quality of education among partner institutions, the involvement of African universities leaves much to be desired. This disconnect is due to the fact that only a few universities in Africa have established IAEPs with universities in northern and southern countries. For instance, the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa has enrolled about 22,000 students from 200 countries⁷. However, it is pertinent to indicate that this is a rather unique experience as there are very few African universities that operate IAEPs that originate from within. This phenomenon is attributed to the fact that the majority of African governments and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), as opposed to their northern counterparts, do not set aside funds for supporting staffs and students who wish to study abroad. This suggests that the majority of academic staff and students from most African universities, who participate in IAEPs both within and outside their respective countries are sponsored by either Development Partners (DP), donors (including bilateral and multilateral organizations) and international non-governmental institutions such as such as Fulbright, the Commonwealth, the German Academic Exchange Service

⁶ See: <http://www.international.unsw.edu.au/inbound-exchanges/exchange-option>. Accessed in June 2011.

⁷ See: <http://www.clemson.edu/academics/programs/study-abroad/programs/exchange-programs/>. Accessed in July 2011.

(DAAD) and philanthropic organizations, mostly located in northern countries.⁸

Factors responsible for the establishment of International Academic Exchange Programmes

For many decades, IAEPs have been promoted as a strategic component for strengthening academic curricula of most northern and southern universities. These supposedly, mutually-beneficial academic exchange programs have been motivated by several factors including cultural, social, economic, and technological. First, in terms of promoting culture, international academic exchange programs offer unique opportunities for beneficiaries to explore, appreciate and understand different academic and non-academic cultures both within and across universities in northern and southern countries respectively. Such social and cultural knowledge is necessary for eliminating, minimizing and demystifying misconceptions, fears and prejudices among students and staff, especially those from the northern countries regarding the real-life conditions of people (including fellow students and staff) in universities located in southern countries. On the other hand, at an individual level, most academic staff and students exchange programs especially those from universities located in southern countries get opportunities to broaden not only their own personal academic competencies and qualifications but to also contribute to building strong institutional academic links and social networks with their northern counterparts. By so doing, these international academic links and networks tend to be beneficial to respective universities and countries in many diverse ways. The explanation on the cultural factors are best captured in a statement that was made by Michelle Obama, at Howard University,

⁸ See [www.sarua.org/file/Internationalization of Higher Education Final Paper-ProfPaul Tiyumba Zeleza.pdf](http://www.sarua.org/file/Internationalization_of_Higher_Education_Final_Paper-ProfPaul_Tiyumba_Zeleza.pdf): Accessed in September 2014

Washington, D.C., when encouraging American students to register for courses outside their region:

Getting ahead in today's work place isn't just about the skills you bring from the classroom. It is also about the experiences you have with the world beyond our borders, with people and languages and culture that are very different from our own.⁹

Further, in supporting the above arguments, Meeth L. (1966) argue that international academic exchange programs are necessary for breaking racial barriers both within and across universities particularly those affecting university staffs and students from different continents. More specifically, he indicated that providing opportunities for students and staff from universities in the northern and southern countries to meet regularly or in certain periods promotes better global understandings on diverse development issues among participating actors well as among the institutions and communities in which these students or staffs comes from. In supporting the above fact, Mohamoud (2003) argues that the acculturation process undergone by many of the African Diaspora in the Netherlands has enabled them to learn and adopt the idea of the voluntary association from Dutch society, which they subsequently exported to their respective home countries.

Third, both Irving, C (2008) and Zeleza T.P (2012) argue that universities in northern countries promote IAEP for economic purposes. However, they argue that economic benefits from IAEP accruing to different categories of actors involved are not uniform neither consistent but it varies from program to program and place to place depending on the length of study as well as specific type of roles performed by direct and indirect beneficiaries. For example, the direct beneficiaries of IAEP include participating staffs and students from respective universities whereas indirect beneficiaries include travel

⁹ First Lady Michelle Obama Speech to students who graduated from to George Washington University College in December 19, 2010

and health insurance companies, hotels/hostels and host families with whom staffs and students reside in the recipient countries located either in northern or southern countries.

At this juncture, it is important to note that most students and staff involved in international academic exchange programs in northern universities are required to pay huge sums of money when travelling abroad for covering tuition fees and other direct expenses such as travel, accommodation and medical insurance. However, significant differences have been observed with regards financial costs incurred by staffs and students from northern universities as well as methods of payments¹⁰. For instance, in most northern universities, a larger share of those funds tends to be paid directly to host institutions and students as well. On the contrary, in most universities in the southern countries, those funds are given to the direct beneficiaries including staffs and students who are directly involved.

Further, it has been noted that financial costs incurred by individual foreign students or academic institutions sending or receiving students from abroad are not uniform. In most universities both in universities in the northern and southern countries, financial costs tend to vary from time to time and place to place depending on a number of factors such as type and length of the study abroad program, type of accommodation, level of economic development and quality of life in the receiving country. In addition, in some northern universities, students are required to pay for additional expenses such as social and cultural tourism, as well as risk management.

Additionally, it has been noted that students from northern universities who undertake short term academic exchanges in southern universities are permitted to pay their tuition fees to either their home or host institutions. Surprisingly, it has been established that most of the time, most students from northern universities prefer to

¹⁰ Most universities worldwide have separate fee structures for local and foreign students whereas the later pays almost three times more compared to the later.

pay their tuition fees in their respective home campuses for purposes of maintaining their foreign money within their home universities. This implies that universities in the northern countries who enrol many students from abroad end up generating reasonable incomes for their respective universities and countries. In supporting this, Philip Steenkamp (2008) reported that the Province of Ontario in Canada has greatly benefitted from the economic dividends of IAEPs. However, without disclosing the exact figures, he reported that, *“Each international student was estimated to contribute more than \$25,000 to the economy – thus making education for international students a \$900 million industry in Ontario.”*¹¹

Similarly, Zeleza P.T (2012) quoting from NAFSA report of 2010 reported that in the year 2009-10, the United States of America (U.S.A) raised about in \$18.78 billion from 690,923 international students who enrolled for various academic courses. In addition to this, it was reported that international students and staff bring valuable diversity to the classroom, the campus, and the larger community which translates into improved academic experience better understanding of the world. Zeleza, T. P. 2012 added another dimension showing that in the long run IAEP have proven to be the highway for preparing students and staff for a variety of professional careers in the globalized world that is linked with enhancing national development and competitiveness as a means of generating extra institutional incomes.

In most cases, most staffs and students who participate in international academic exchange programs from universities in southern countries get financial support (either full or partial) in the form of academic scholarships¹². Full academic scholarships covers direct

¹¹ Deputy Minister of Training, Colleges, and Universities for Ontario State , Canada available in the website as quoted in July 2011

¹² Most universities in northern countries provide a range of financial awards and academic scholarships for assisting prospective and on-going students to pursue

expenses such as return flight tickets, local transportation expenses in the foreign country, accommodation, food and other daily necessities as well as health insurance. On the contrary, a partial academic scholarship caters for either tuition fees or travel and accommodation expenses. However, it is worth noting that in some rare occasions, governments in southern countries (especially those in Sub-Saharan African countries) provides full academic scholarships to its staffs and students to participate in IAEPs available either in universities located in northern or southern countries. This implies that staff and students from African countries receive financial support from governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, and philanthropic organizations as well as universities in northern countries. Thus, it is evident that such organizations have developed the culture of setting aside specific funds for promoting IAEPs with similar institution both within and outside their respective regions. For instance, some of the international organizations that are known for supporting IAEPs include the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Commonwealth, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Global Youth Organization (GYO), Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation and Fulbright Scholarships and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Swedish Agency for Research Collaboration (SAREC) and ERASMUS programme¹³ just to mention a few. The fact that most of these organizations are located in northern

studies in various disciplines including those from Africa. A good example is the Erasmus Programme and , the Commonwealth Scholarship Programme

¹³ Since the established of the ERASMUS programme in 1987, it has supported 200,000 students to study and work abroad each year. The primary objectives of Erasmus are to benefit students educationally, linguistically and culturally through their experience of living and learning in other countries; promote co-operation between institutions; and help develop "a pool of well-qualified, open-minded and internationally experienced young people as future professionals".

countries suggests that a larger portion of financial support for IAEPs for staff and students in southern countries is available in these countries. Thus, it is evident that IAEPs create great opportunities for raising government revenues in northern countries that are later used to supporting both short and long term IAEPs including those with universities in southern countries.

Fourth, it has been observed that some universities in northern countries have established IAEP for academic purposes. In very brief terms, most IAEP involving academic staff and students from universities in southern countries in particular are established in order to develop and strengthen capacities for designing internationally-competitive academic courses and joint /collaborative activities during this era of globalisation of knowledge. To-date, the growth of Information, Communication and Technology (ICTs) has greatly facilitated faster academic cooperation between universities in northern and southern countries. In particular, on-going advancements in ICTs such as e-services and facilities have strengthened the coordination of IAEPs both within and across respective universities, countries and continents with few difficulties. This coordination is possible because most universities in northern countries have flexible learning systems that allow students to transfer credits from courses abroad to their respective northern programs.

It is pertinent to show that to-date, the implementation of IAEPs has become much easier to organize due to three major factors, namely, improvements in technology, the rise of the internet, and globalization of knowledge. All these factors individually or combined have created opportunities for universities in northern countries to create and maintain strong and healthy IAEPs as well as academic networks with students and staff in southern countries. Some of these include academic chat boards and Web CT-related programs. Further, it has been observed that through IAEP, most academic staff and students from universities in southern countries acquire other necessary skills and competencies related to ICT such

as internet proficiency and access to current journals, publications as well as improved writing, analytical, communication and advocacy skills. These competencies are necessary for the improvement of the quality of education at their home universities in southern countries¹⁴.

Unfortunately, this growth in ICTs has been accompanied by significant discrepancies in terms of access between and across universities in northern and southern countries. Some of the major factors for the non-uniformity of IAEPs include low and uneven socio-economic and technological development especially in southern countries particularly those in SSA. In more concrete terms, most academic staff and students in universities in northern countries have better access to ICTs compared to their southern counterparts, particularly those at Sub-Sahara African universities. Whereas, most staff and students from northern countries have access to computers at early age, this is not necessarily the case for their southern counterparts. As a matter of fact, the majority of university staff and students in most southern countries, particularly in SSA, including those who are enrolled in public schools and universities, are highly disadvantaged in this regard. Only the few staff and students who attended private secondary schools and universities have access to computers and ICT services/facilities right from kindergarten levels. Further, Huyer, S., and Hafkin, N., (2007) have observed t huge gaps in relation to men and women access to ICT by arguing that "gender in relation to ICT use and access remains largely an uncharted domain" (p.36).

¹⁴ During the implementation of the project between IAS Carleton, IDS UDSM and University of Sierra Leone students gave those ideas as some of the major outputs of this academic link

Advantages of IAEP

First, as far as academics are concerned, international academic exchange programs involving staff and students from either northern or southern countries have many advantages including the potential of bringing diversity into classrooms, to campuses, host cities and communities at large. For instance, diversity in classroom interactions happens especially when a foreign tutor teaches topics related to his or her country or region of origin. For instance, during the 2011 winter semester, I taught a one semester course on Gender and Development with a focus on Africa (AFRI 4050) to fourth year students enrolled at the Institute of African Studies (IAS) at Carleton University in Ottawa. In short, in their course feedback session, most students expressed great satisfaction with having been taught by a tutor from Africa. Indeed, most students indicated that they were highly inspired by first-hand information from a professor of African origin. In addition, the same students reported that they were impressed by both my teaching and presentation styles, my rich experience in conducting research at local levels as well as my outreach activities. Most students confessed that such an experience enabled them to clarify and clear some myths, misconceptions and stereotypes ideas about African people, including the intellectual ability. Indeed, some few students indicated they knew African students and staff did not know how to communicate in English or French¹⁵.

Second, the evolution and usage of English language as a medium of communication in most universities in southern countries has made it easier for university staff and students in northern countries to cooperate with their counterparts in southern countries particularly on research, training and other academic activities such as meetings and workshops. Overall, increased exposure to the English language and ICT in particular, has accelerated the pace of knowledge

¹⁵ These views were echoed by students who have not participated in any IAEP during class discussions

sharing between partner institutions and has stimulated the growth of ideas through IAEP and finally resulted in improvement of national economies. Thus, it is worth noting that in the long run, IAEPs have the potential to minimize brain drain if well-tailored and nurtured. In supporting the above argument Pires et al., (1999) and Ndulu, B (2000) showed that over the past four decades a high proportion of students and staff from universities in southern countries (especially those from African universities) who participated in IAEPs in universities in northern countries did not return to their home countries for social, economic, political and institutional reasons.

Third, in addition to improvements in communication, there are other indirect advantages that accrues to actors in southern countries who are directly involved with IAEPs including host families, local communities, hotels and national governments. For instance, research findings from a study by Mohamed (2003) on the African Diaspora in the Netherlands concluded that

Financial remittances provide a lifeline for many of Africa's poor. At the micro-level remittance has become a much needed and reliable source of stable income to many marginalized families, extended families and local community groups. Financial remittances also act as a safety net to the poor in many developing countries whose governments lack the means to make such provision. During natural disasters, for example, increased contributions from African Diaspora effectively provide a form of insurance which helps families and communities cope during crises. As such, remittances from the African Diaspora not only help provide relief for the poor but also, increasingly, serve to guarantee economic stability in many poor countries in Africa. Empirical evidence clearly shows that remittance is a form of pro-poor finance and yet it still remains an under-appreciated flow of funds.

Types of academic programs for staffs

There are two types of IAEPs that are most favoured by universities both universities in northern and southern countries, namely, short term and long term exchange programs. Typically, most of the-

se academic programmes are designed and implemented by academic staff from the two partnering universities and are either individually or jointly taught by the same academic staff from northern or southern universities.

Short-term academic exchange programs

There is no standard definition of what constitutes a short term IAEP. In very simple terms, a short term academic program can be defined using three variables, namely: type of beneficiaries (staff and students jointly or independently); duration; and expected outcomes (including obtaining a certificate of attendance or grades for one or two semesters). In terms of duration, for most northern and southern universities, short term academic exchange programs last from one week to three months that run consecutively. However, for some other universities' short term exchanges programmes refer to those courses offered for a period shorter than six months in one university. Yet for other universities, short term exchange programs refer to programs that do not require students to stay at one foreign university for the whole programme period but it encourage student to participate in student internship placements available at different phases of the academic study period. Under the latter arrangements, students from either northern or southern universities are exposed to an intensive program that increases their understanding of other cultures, communities and languages¹⁶.

On the other hand , for students especially those from universities in northern countries, short term academic exchange programs include enrolment in one semester courses abroad, attendance at summer courses or participation in intensive cultural exchange programs that focus on home stays, development of language skills and

¹⁶ This refers to the academic exchange between University of Dares Salaam (Tanzania) and Helsinki University and Jyvaskyla University in Finland

local community service and cultural events. Under these arrangements, students (in most universities in northern countries) who want to participate in such short term exchange programs are not obliged to find counterparts from universities in southern countries. Likewise, such short term academic exchange programs are favoured by students from all disciplines from universities both in the northern and southern countries. For instance, between the period 2006 and 2010, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) based at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), used to select two best performing graduate students to attend a one semester courses in Masters in International Development at the Jyväskylä University in Finland. Sadly, as earlier mentioned, this program did not last long due to lack of financial support.

On the other hand, short term academic exchange programs for academic staff from universities in northern and southern countries, refers to a variety of academic activities. Some of the most common ones include planning and teaching one or two semester courses abroad, conducting joint research projects and/or organizing international workshops and meetings in either northern or southern countries. To a large extent, funds for implementing such activities come from northern countries. However, a token contribution (mostly in kind) is provided by universities in the southern universities including office space, working equipments.

Long-term academic exchange programs

Generally, in most universities both in northern and southern countries, long term academic exchange programs are defined as courses or academic activities that last at least six months and run up to more than one full year or more. More specifically, for students, they involve staying at least one full academic year abroad doing a two semester academic program or pursuing graduate degree programs that result in earning post graduate awards such as Masters or

PhD degrees. On the other hand, for academic staff, they involve participating in various academic activities such as sabbatical leaves, part-time teaching, doing joint research and other related academic activities preferably at universities abroad. Indeed, the past few decades saw high academic staff mobility from universities in southern countries to northern countries, labelled as brain drain. However, for most universities especially in southern countries, both short and long term IAEPs involving temporary intellectual migration of staff from southern universities to northern universities is either welcomed, tolerated and/or promoted due to its many advantages already discussed above. In other words, fears of brain drain are minimized because the majority of academic staffs from universities in the southern countries involved in IAEPs are full-time employees who are expected to take up their respective jobs after the completion of such programs.

Processes and procedures of establishing international academic exchange programs (IAEPs) between northern and southern universities

In this sub-section, the main interest is to discuss institutional processes and procedures for establishing and managing IAEPs. Generally, most universities in northern and southern countries have special departments/units responsible for coordinating study abroad programs/including both short and long term. Although these offices are given different names but in most universities (both in northern and southern countries) they are responsible for managing various issues concerning staff and students involved in IAEPs including offering guidance on academic courses and placements, accommodation and social and recreation activities. More specifically, international student offices/departments prepare specific detailed information on types of international scholarships and other opportunities available abroad, application procedures as well as opportunities for funding. In terms of procedures, students in most universities in

northern countries who wish to participate in academic exchange programmes are required to apply for long courses preferably ten (10 months) in advance of departure, whereas at southern universities this process generally takes a minimum of four months to most universities except Canada¹⁷. Further, some universities in northern countries require applicants to show proof of preliminary application forms and evidence of financial support before arranging individual interviews and submitting a longer application. All these processes are tedious and time consuming.

For instance, most universities in northern countries demand a full application from the beginning of the process. After receiving application forms, formal interviews are scheduled for further discussions before filing application forms. Likewise, there are other conditions that must be fulfilled by the respective applicants including having a GPA of around 3.0 or higher in order to qualify for academic scholarships from abroad. This means potential applicants are selected on merit based criteria basing on individual performance as well as results of personal interviews and evidence of financial support and accommodation. Further, in some academic programs, prospective exchange students or staffs are expected to demonstrate some ability to speak the host language of the country as well as computer literacy. However, some universities in northern countries are not very strict on the two later conditions because they believe that such candidates will get the opportunity to learn and develop host country language competency on the ground.

As far as accommodation is concerned, most students from universities in northern countries going abroad for academic exchange programs have two major options to choose from namely, living on or off campus. In some universities in most southern countries, for-

¹⁷ The process of getting a visa for Canada from Tanzania in particular can take more than four months. This is due to the fact that the visa office is in Nairobi.

foreign students prefer off campus accommodation due to a number of reasons. First, in most cases foreign students opting to live on campus are expected to compete with local students for a placement.¹⁸ However, some foreign students opt to live off campus either with host families or in university rented accommodations owned by private institutions. For foreign students who opt to leave with host families, they are expected to contribute to the daily subsistence of that family, pay for their room, food and other provisions. Interestingly, the latter accommodation arrangements are popular among staff and graduate students on long term academic exchange programs. Others foreign students and staff studying in universities in southern countries prefer to live either in shared houses in private owned houses/apartments or in private owned student apartments and hostels. However, the latter types are less popular in most countries such as Tanzania because they often require such students/staffs to sign six months or longer contract depending on the length of stay at the institution or in the respective country. In view of the above, respective students and staff are advised to search for accommodation as soon as they receive their acceptance letters and student visa. At the same time, students on long term IAEP are advised to have a back-up plan just in case the type of accommodation they are interested in is unavailable. Other alternatives include, making arrangements for temporary accommodation in motels or hotels and or student hostels where they can live until they find a permanent place to stay.

In terms of type of exchange program, there are no standard rules or regulations governing the design and implementation of IAEPs between universities in northern and southern countries, including courses to be offered by international visiting professors. However, in most universities in northern countries, the process of

¹⁸ At the University of Dar es Salaam, the policy favours foreign students in terms of access to campus accommodation.

establishing academic exchange programs starts with an application for internationalization of the existing curriculum. This was the case with the Department of Women Studies, University of Florida, and the Institute of African Studies (IAS) at Carleton University. In the former case, responsible professors are required to indicate the course they wish to teach during a particular semester, amount and resources required including human and capital. In addition, respective professors are required to show sources of such resources as well evidence showing how such resources will be used for developing academic materials including online course components, video conferences, field work, travel, graduate student assistance, software and other related course materials. On the contrary, in later case, the process begins with an application for financial support from university and other government or international NGOs to support visiting scholars from African universities. After raising the funds, the IAS sends applications to selected African universities asking them to nominate potential academic staff who can participate in teaching two courses at the university over the course of an academic year. Further, the potential applicant from an African university is also required to propose two undergraduate courses to be taught one in the IAS and the second in the Department of Political Science, Carleton University respectively¹⁹. However in some other universities in Europe²⁰, such as the Helsinki University, the process of developing a graduate degree program in Development Studies involved staff and students from the University of Helsinki in (Finland), University of Dar es Salaam (in Tanzania) and University of Zambia (in Zambia). This means the beneficiaries were directly involved in the design and actual implementation of this IAEP between the three universities

¹⁹ The author taught two courses at Carleton university including AFRI 4050 in the IAS and PSCI in the Department of Political Science during the second semester

²⁰ The author participated in a two months visiting scholarship at the Helsinki University from June to August 2008

including one from northern countries and two from southern countries.

On the other hand, some African universities operate less common forms of international academic exchanges involving the administration of one semester courses to foreign students. For instance, since 2008, the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) has been hosting approximately twenty students from OWU for a ten (10) weeks course titled “Women, Development and Environment” (BWS 300.4)²¹. In principle, this course, which was designed for foreign students by professors from the OWU, is executed by Tanzania professors. Local students are not allowed to attend this course due to the mismatch between the duration of academic courses in these two universities. Academic courses at the UDSM’s semesters run for two semesters comprising of 15 weeks each whereas OWU’s run for 10 to 12 weeks respectively. Overall, it is evident that processes and procedures followed by universities both in northern and southern countries in establishing and managing successful IAEPs are not uniform neither consistent. In fact, there are noticeable variations both in terms of modalities and technical aspects both within and across universities in northern and southern countries.

Strengths and weaknesses of international academic exchange programs

Box 1 below provides a summary on reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of IAEPs that were drawn from my own experiences as well as those of students involved in my latest visiting scholarship at the IAS, Carleton University during the 2010-2011 academic year. More specifically, while at Carleton University I taught two courses: Gender and Development with a focus on Africa (AFRI 4050) and Gender and Globalisation (PSCI 4500). Towards the end

²¹ The course is still running up this year (2014).

of the semester, students were asked to provide reflections on both the strengths and weaknesses of courses taught by visiting scholars from African universities. In total, the two courses were attended by 29 final year undergraduate students. Overall, the all students 29 (100 percent) emphasized the positive aspects as summarized in Box 1.

Box No 1: Positive reflection from students

- Satisfaction from teaching methodology that reflected first-hand information and wide experience on topics covered.
- Ability to link theories, policies and practical issues happening at global, regional and national levels.
- Enjoyed knowing African views on Africa's development that confirmed and or complemented what is written in text books.
- Exposure to alternative learning perspectives that enriched our common understanding on various development issues in Africa.
- Gained knowledge and skills on how to identify and interpret Africa's development using a gender lens.
- The richness of the experience from a professional and personal viewpoint.
- Satisfaction from participating in group discussions and reading journal articles that provided more insights on issues that were reflected in the course outline.

On the other hand, a few students identified several negative issues, which affected the effectiveness of the staff exchange programme. These are summarized in Box 2:

Box No 2: Weaknesses of staff exchange programs

- Unfamiliarity of foreign staff with host university academic/administrative procedures such as WebCt, etc.
- Last-minute cancellation of semester one course due to technical reasons on the side of the foreign staff.
- Limited outreach activities and application of visual aids.
- Language barriers and cultural differences make some of the students feel uncomfortable in the class.

Personal reflections on advantages and disadvantages of

IAEPs

Overall, there are more advantages of participating in IAEPs than disadvantages. These advantages can be examined at both institutional and individual levels. First, at the institutional level, the UDSM saw my participation in this type of IAEP as an opportunity for me to pursue part of my sabbatical leave. At the UDSM, academic staffs are expected to take a sabbatical leave every four years after completion of their PhD studies. In the past, there were many opportunities for sabbatical leave outside Tanzania but over the past two decades, things have changed and it has become increasingly difficult to secure the required scholarships. Also, as is the case in most universities in northern and southern countries, the culture of “publish or perish” is very strong. So, one of the UDSM expectations was for me to publish least one or two articles in internationally-recognized journals. In this respect, the acceptance of this article for publication by the IAS at Carleton University is highly appreciated. In the same vein, I was also able to publish another journal article on “Prospects and Challenges of Increasing Women’s Access to Higher Education Institutions in Tanzania in the *African Women’s Journal*.”²² In addition, while at the IAS, I presented four academic papers to different audiences, one in a public seminar that was organized by the IAS²³, Aga Khan Foundation²⁴ and another at a public seminar that was organized by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)²⁵. I also participated in several meetings in

²² African Women’s Journal Issue 03, July-December 2011 pp 15-20.

²³ The title of the paper is “Enhancement of Women’s Capacity to Participate in Competitive Elections in Tanzania” IAS, Carleton University (April 2011).

²⁴ The title of the paper is “Towards Enhancing the Role of Civil Society Organizations in Promoting Stability and Change in Challenging Social and Economic Development in East Africa” for Agha Khan Foundation in Ottawa, Canada”, February 2011.

²⁵ The title of the paper is “Is the Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming Strategy in High Education Institutions in Africa Making a Difference at all? The case of University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Makerere University (Uganda) (August 2011)

North America to discuss development issues pertaining to Africa and the world at large. Some of these included the 2011 Canadian Association of African Studies conference at York University, just to mention a few. At these academic events, I acted as an ambassador for the university UDSM, promoting it to participants from across the globe.

At the individual level, I was able to widen my experience of teaching foreign students. Although, there are some minor differences when comparing teaching of foreign and local students, it was striking that both student and staff (including foreigners) encounters various gender-related experiences in learning and accommodation environments. For instance, issues related to sexual harassment and gender-based violence, while often not openly discussed, were found to be common among northern and southern staff and students. As an attempt to concretize these issues, we designed a new course for students at Carleton University and UDSM titled "Gender Violence in Higher Education in North America" (WSGT 4910). This course was taught jointly by Professors from Carleton, UDSM and University of Sierra Leone. At the UDSM this course was made part of course known as "Gender and Sexuality" (DS 664). Being the first tutor from an African university to design and run this joint course expected to run for at least three years (until 2014) is a great achievement for me and for UDSM at large. During the first year of teaching this course, our students both at UDSM, University of Sierra Leone and Carleton conducted empirical research studies at their respective institutions on GBV related issues that came up with stunning research findings confirming the prevalence of different forms of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, among students and staff. Sadly, this violence takes place despite explicit anti-sexual harassment policies at both universities. Last but not the least, other direct benefits of IAEPs includes remittances to the families of visiting scholars abroad.

Gender aspects related to IAEPs involving universities in northern and southern countries

First, there is dearth of official data showing actual numbers staff and students who have participated in various forms of IAEP especially from universities in southern countries and SSA countries in particular with respect to sex²⁶ and gender²⁷. The same applies for data showing actual number of foreign students who have benefitted from IAEP over time. Probably this is due to the fact that most universities in southern countries (SSA countries inclusive) have not given sufficient consideration on the need to establish strong and vibrant international academic exchange programs (Mlama, 2000 and Zeleza, 2012). In particular, Mlama (2008) argue that it is mostly universities in northern countries that prepare official data showing actual numbers of its staff and students who participate in diverse forms of IAEP, including those originating from own universities and from universities in southern countries.

Second, although there is no concrete gender- disaggregated data showing the actual number of academic staff and students from universities in southern countries (an in particular from SSA countries) who have been involved in IAEPs but anecdotal evidence suggests that the proportion of female staff and students from southern universities involved in IAEP is relatively lower than that of their male counterparts. Basically, this is due the fact that the proportion of female staffs and students in most African universities except in South Africa and Nigeria is relatively lower than that of male staff and students.²⁸ As a result of low enrolment s of female staff and

²⁶ Sex refers to the biological make up of men and women and it is used as a unit of analysis to show quantitative aspects

²⁷ Gender refers to the social identities, expectations and privileges different cultures construct for members of the different biological sex. It is used for reflecting qualitative aspects among men and women in their diversity

²⁸ For instance in Tanzania, female students constitute only 34 percent of total students enrolled in higher education's institutions including public and private. Likewise, the proportion of female staffs is even lower than that.

students in most universities in southern countries (and Africa in particular), more male staffs and students have accessed IAEP opportunities available in universities in northern countries. This situation is caused by various factors, including institutional and technical. Some of the associated institutional weaknesses include a lack of explicit gender policies within IAEP's and in particular study abroad programs, limited publicity of available opportunities as well as a lack of financial resources and mentors. On the other hand, technical problems include limited knowledge of ICT at the individual level, inadequate exposure to IAEP and limited awareness on potential funding opportunities available in northern countries. Most of the information on the latter is publicised in the internet and other publications which take longer to reach most universities in southern countries including Africa. Some studies have confirmed that female staff and students do not access the internet as frequently as men.²⁹

Third, it is pertinent to indicate that most universities, particularly those located in northern countries, advocate for the establishment of IAEPs because of the many related advantages, most importantly an enhanced quality of education and cultural development among staff and students. On the contrary, most universities in southern countries have failed to benefit from IEAPs in northern and southern universities due to both technical and financial constraints (Mlama, 2000; Zeleza, 2010). In conclusion, it can be safely argued that staff, students as well as participating universities in northern and southern countries, greatly benefit from the establishment and maintenance of IAEPs. However over the past two decades, most academic staff and students from African universities -- including those

²⁹ Huyer,S and Hafkin,N (2007), *Engendering Knowledge Society: Measuring Women Participation* Orbicon :ISBN 978-2-922651-10-2 and Gilwald; Stork C; and Mileak,A (2010) *Gender Assessment of ICT Access and Usage in Africa : Towards Evidence Based ICT Policy and Regulations: Vol. 1, 2010, Policy Paper No. 5*

in Tanzania have not been able to fully utilize available opportunities for various reasons that will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

Problems and challenges facing staff and students involved in IAEP

Four major problems and challenges have been identified in connection to the effectiveness of IAEPs, especially with regards to African universities. First, staffs and students from most universities in southern countries and African countries in particular, participate in IAEPs as unequal partners for various reasons. This is caused by the fact that most universities have limited resources (such as computers, rooms and IT experts) necessary for the successful implementation of effective international staff and student academic networks. As a result, most universities in southern countries fail to sustain international academic student/staff exchange programmes once they have been established.

Second, some students from universities in northern countries who have participated in academic exchange programs in some African universities have raised concerns about their African counterparts' ICT knowledge including computer usage skills and internet proficiency which is crucial for effective participation in e- discussions and academic e-chat boards³⁰. Second, some students from northern universities have been raising concern on several issues such as worries about delayed graduation, few role models within family and respective faculties who have studied abroad as well as safety and security especially those who enrolled in African universities. However, it is worth noting that insecurity incidents to foreign students in African universities are rare and no empirical study has

³⁰ In 2012, IAS at Carleton University sent a student to o UDSM to assist students with ICT related issues including use of the Web CT.

been conducted to ascertain the magnitude of this safety problem as well as its relationship with sexual harassment and gender-based violence. Some universities in southern countries such as the UDSM were obliged to introduce anti-sexual harassment policies and other regulations to ensure the safety of local and foreign students and staff.

Third, students from both universities in northern and southern countries have expressed that most IAEP are quite expensive and even if students and staff are able secure academic scholarships, parents and respective institutions are expected to contribute towards extracurricular activities. However, due to inadequate support from parents and guardians, most students from universities in southern countries tend to look for temporary jobs in order to generate incomes for such extra curriculum activities.

Fourth, to-date, participation of staff and student from universities in southern countries in IAEP in northern universities is increasingly becoming a big challenge because as time goes such opportunities are not only shrinking but they are also irregular³¹. This means only few lucky students from universities in southern countries get opportunities to participate in IAEP. Fifth, from my own experience, I have noted that students from universities in the northern and southern countries are not involved directly in the design stage of IAEPs. Rather, most students and staff, both in universities in northern and southern countries, are brought on board during the implementation stage, especially at undergraduate level. Therefore, this article asserts that the outcomes of student academic exchange programs have not been fully satisfactory for students particularly those from African universities.

³¹ Since the onset of the financial crisis in the western countries in the mid 1990's financial support to Third World Countries has been reduced drastically

Emerging lessons and best practices

Four major lessons have been established from the reviewed literatures concerning IAEP between universities in northern and southern countries as well as best practices that can be emulated in the future. First, as earlier mentioned above, although IAEPs have been found to be beneficial to all participating institutions, but there are some complex and technical issues that tend to limit mutual involvement of universities particularly those in southern countries. Second, there are both direct benefits and indirect benefits that staff and students from universities in southern countries in particular get by participating in IAEP available in northern countries. At individual level, most staff/student from southern countries acquires both technical skills and knowledge on various development aspects not popular in their respective home countries. Third, it also became evident that to a larger extent participating universities from southern countries have benefitted from improved career development among its staff and student as well as increased access to financial and human resources for institutional development. Some of these include access to funds for running joint research, academic courses, consultancies and meetings/conferences and symposia programmes as well as academic scholarships. More specifically, the involvement of academic staff from universities in southern countries in organizing and implementing joint academic activities such as teaching, research and consultancies contribute to the visibility of respective individuals and their institutions in particular. It also results in the enormous growth of practical skills on the part of the participant, with an impact on local development.

In supporting to the above argument Freudenberg S, et al 2007 showed how medical staff and students from universities in Tanzania and Germany benefitted from each other through sharing and

exchanging of best practices used for teaching on medical students³². Through such IAEP arrangements, medical students and staff from German medical universities were given opportunities for teaching and assessing fellow local students studying medical related studies in Tanzanian universities. In particular, he showed how this type of teaching arrangements enabled staffs and students from German universities to learn many new things including teaching in an under resourced environment with inadequate facilities, resources and capacities. Thus, through such experiences students and staff from universities from German universities obtained first-hand information that was used for designing new collaborative projects. In much more broad terms, such opportunities are eye opener to both students and staff from participating institutions because on the one hand, it enabled them to know what to expect from either side and on the other side it enables them to seek for solutions to observed problems as well as other related shocks including language, culture and climate issues.

For instance, the above source reported how the participation of a senior Tanzanian surgeon in a six months intensive medical training in Germany enabled him to improve his basic knowledge in ultrasonography. Further, it was reported that at the end of such training period, the surgeon purchased a compact Ultrasound machine for the Surgical Department in Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) in Tanzania.³³ Prior to having this equipment, the hospital used to do ultrasonographic evaluation of its patients in the congested Radiology Department within the same hospital. It was further reported that, after the completion of his first short-term staff exchange visit to Tanzania, one experienced Germany Surgical Ultrasonologist from Mannheim University continued to provide back-stopping ser-

³² Retrieved from www.bioline.org.br/request?js04027 in July 2011

³³ Muhimbili National Hospital is one of the four referral hospitals in Tanzania which was established immediately after independence in 1961.

vices at the Muhimbili National Hospital through organizing short-term capacity building courses on diagnostic and Interventional Ultrasonography. Similarly, the first-hand experience of this surgeon who worked under unsatisfactory conditions, including limited infrastructure and materials, enables him to appreciate the value and cost-effectiveness of alternative options in health care interventions. In supporting this initiative, the Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences (MUHAS) (which is a teaching hospital) organized joint capacity building sessions to teach more local experts about the "Ultrasound Project," as it has come to be known locally. Through this project, which was borne out of an individual IAEP staff member, tremendous improvements have been recorded in relation to timely patient care at Muhimbili Hospital.

Third, the participation of staff and students in IAEPs from universities in southern and northern countries has the potential for creating long-term relationships and social capital among the immediate actors and beneficiaries, as well as tangible positive outcomes. As mentioned earlier, as a result of a visiting scholarship program, a new academic connectivity program between one North American university (Carleton University) and two African universities (University of Dar es Salaam and University of Sierra Leone) was established and implemented up to 2014. It is most likely that similar academic connectivity programs with universities in the southern countries will be established³⁴. Thus, it is evident that through these different types of IAEP it is possible to guarantee continuity and sustainability of associations for many years to come. To this effect, the joint project teaching and action research project on sexual harassment on university campuses in Canada and Africa will hopefully continue for some time.

Fourth, at the individual level, the participation of experienced and senior professionals from universities in northern countries in

³⁴ In 2012-2013 the IAS recruited a visiting scholar from Ghana.

various types of IAEPs has also resulted in creating long-lasting personal relationships and friendships with their southern counterparts. These mutual relationships have been found to foster long-term cooperation and further exchange of academic goods and services including through joint research projects or publications. In this respect therefore, IAEP will continue to contribute to both individual and institutional growth even after their official completion.

Fifth, as argued Zeleza (2012), if properly organized and utilized IAEP can have multiple advantages such as helping students especially from universities in Sub Saharan African countries to develop cognitive skills for critical, comparative and complex thinking, cultivate capacities for cross-cultural communication, adaptation, flexibility, tolerance, and empathy, and enhance their ability to recognize difference and deepen their understanding of themselves, their society, and learning styles. This will later enable them to design effective and sustainable IAEP that include a range of challenging activities and practical field study visits to areas outside the university and cities. Such opportunities will enable foreign students and staff to put into practice the theories they learnt in class and compare them with the real life conditions in the respective country. For example, the German surgeon who worked under low-resource conditions in local Tanzanian communities enabled him to gain skills for dealing with neglected and less common diseases using new and more advanced pathologies.³⁵

Last but not the least, it became evident that for students and staff from universities both in northern and southern countries (Africa in particular), participation in IAEPs is a gateway to other local and international opportunities. For instance, although DAAD offers a special program for the promotion of university partnerships, it also has links with other organizations that provide programs for specialized surgical exchange with the Tropical Health and Educa-

³⁵ Retrieved from www.bioline.org.br/request?js04027

tion Trust based in London and the Canadian Network for International Surgery. Through these two links, Tanzanian universities have fostered partnerships with many sister institutions in northern countries.

Conclusion and way forward

In concluding this article it can be safely argued the history and origin of IAEPs involving staff and students from universities in northern and southern countries have existed for many decades. In addition such IAEP have been to be beneficial to various actors who are directly or indirectly involved including individuals, institutions, governments and respective universities. Further, it has been noted that the involvement of universities from southern countries (especially in the SSA countries) in terms of sponsoring its own academic staff and students is rather limited, Further, no concrete and up-to-date data disaggregated along gender, region, type and period of involvement lines is readily available to provide evidence based facts showing the involvement of men and women in their diversity. As a result it was noted that most IAEPs, especially those in northern universities attracts students and staffs particularly from European and American countries in particular. In the same vein, it was established that very few students from universities in northern countries prefer to study long term courses available at universities in southern countries including Africa, the Middle East and Asia. In view of this trend, there is a need for educational actors in northern countries to create a levelled playing field for universities in northern and southern countries so they can operate a reciprocal and mutual-sharing platform. By so doing, this will result in creation of more effective and sustainable IAEPs that are not only more relevant but also more contextual attuned to the reality 'on the ground' and transformative in nature.

So far, it also became evident that past efforts to establish and maintain successful and sustainable IAEPs have largely resulted in the expansion of academic networks between and among universities in northern countries, rather than with and among their southern counterparts. As a result, most universities in southern countries are still grappling with various factors weakening establishment of successful IAEPs. However, until recently, many of these individual and institutional challenges have not been fully addressed through comprehensive empirical research. For instance, in the year 2009, the United Nations Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC) in close collaboration with key actors dealing with IAEPs in the US, EU and Organization of Islamic Cooperation organized a dialogue in Istanbul, Turkey comprising of various institutions and organizations from around the world to explore obstacles and opportunities in expanding IAEP. One of the major outputs of the 2009 Istanbul Forum was the creation of an embryonic academic network charged with proposing ways to advocate for efficient IAEPs and improve publicity and dissemination of available opportunities both within and across regions.

In this respect, this point to the need for undertaking a comprehensive, holistic, inter-disciplinary research starting at individual country level to examine factors that limit the establishment of effective and sustainable IAEPs between universities in northern and southern countries and in particular those in SSA countries. Thus, the research findings from such a study will be used for influencing review of academic policies and guidelines used by universities, governments and development partners especially those in southern countries.

In addition, these proposed studies can examine southern universities' modalities in promoting or advocating for the establishment of IAEPs and in choosing their type and duration. They can also cover emerging and/or potential gendered outcomes and impacts on the participating institutions, staff and students and identify

and analyse major strengths, weaknesses and challenges associated with implementing IAEPs with northern universities. Further, these studies can review the relevance of existing IAEPs including the type and amount of human and non-human resources required for implementation. In the same vein, this research can examine institutional mechanisms for handling and managing IAEPs, coordination arrangements as well as monitoring and evaluation systems. Last but not the least, these proposed studies ought to offer best practices and suggestions based on practical measures for promoting effective, sustainable and gender-sensitive international staff and student exchange programs between and across universities in northern and southern countries.

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