



Trip Report: Dakar, Senegal

Dates: 03/08-15/2015

Author: Lila B. Karki

Institution(s): Tuskegee University

Purpose: To participate in the African Higher Education Summit (HES) in order to bring InnovATE into the limelight during parallel sessions, interactions with institutions, and individuals. More specifically, to focus on (1) using and gathering more field notes on CPCD and on the use of Syllabus in AET/Senegal, (2) fostering the community of Practice (CoP) from symposium and Summit participants, and (3) extending InnovATE's focus on agricultural education and training (AET) with the Summit participants.

Sites Visited: Dakar

Description of Activities:

Attended the following activities

- Inaugural ceremony
- Plenary session on special Keynote addresses
- Plenary Panel discussions
- Parallel sessions
- Summit declaration

Talking InnovATE with the participants during the breaks

I utilized the time during the breaks to talk about InnovATE to the participants I happened to meet. I initiated talking with "Excuse me, Sir/Madam," I work for InnovATE project funded by the USAID. And I then briefly extended what our consortium partners have been doing through InnovATE in Africa. I immediately mentioned that we focus on AET. Similarly, we invite agricultural educators and practitioners across the globe to join the CoP online pedagogical platform. Promptly, I urged them to share their expertise and experiences about good agricultural practices on CoP and requested them to encourage other experts and producers to use this platform to share their experiences and expertise. Almost everyone I talked to listened attentively and showed interest in joining the CoP online web portal although they were not agricultural educators.

They emphasize the necessity for more practical training opportunities to progress in the African agriculture sector.

Summary of the program:

There were five plenary panel discussions and eight concurrent sessions conducted in order to come up with the summit declaration.

The Summit ended with a bold declaration of attaining 100% terminal degrees for faculty within higher education institutions (HEIs) by 2063, with at least 54% of them being women. Quality and employability of education was debated during the entire Summit. Vocational institutions and community colleges were very much referred and linked to industry for the development of required skills for the labor market. Similarly, the Summit declared that within the next five years, all African countries should have an education sector review that links the different pipelines such as Vocational Training and Education (VTE) and Primary and Secondary Education in terms of quality and relevance. Another topic brought into the discussion on the Summit was curriculum reforms on the African continent where InnovATE's community participatory curriculum development (CPCD) once developed can be a reference for other sectors as this point of declaration is exactly in line with InnovATE's LEARN, DESIGN, and TRAIN approach in Africa and in Feed the Future Countries. The Summit also committed to building capacity in Research, Science, Technology, and Innovation where agricultural education and training (AET/ATE) can play a vital role such as providing advisory, pedagogy, and support services to enhance the human and institutional capacity of the AET institutions. Likewise, improvement in the quality of teaching was another topic very much highlighted in the Summit. This quality issue is also aligned to the InnovATE mandate to enhance and strengthen human and institutional capacity of the agricultural educators and the institutions. The possible interventions discussed in the Summit to improve the quality of teaching by encouraging inquiry driven pedagogical approaches and independent learning, early introduction of students to research, the use of technology, and by balancing enrollment growth with existing institutional capacities. All these areas are within the scope of InnovATE where Community of Practice (CoP) can be one of the good pedagogical platforms. It seems like InnovATE can be a major actor to transform subsistence agriculture into a commercial one through AET as the importance of AET the entire African continent is reflected on the following points.

i) During the last decade, Africa's leaders have repositioned agriculture as a top priority. African leaders agreed to increase public investment in agriculture by a minimum of 10 percent of their national budgets and to raise agricultural productivity by at least 6 percent.

ii) Over its ten years of existence, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan's (CAADP) technically sound investment plans and programs have suffered implementation difficulties at the country level because of the frequent lack of qualified technical staff. As an example, "A young person in Finland is 140 times more likely to get a tertiary education than his peer in Mozambique; a young woman in Finland is 200 times more likely to get a tertiary education than a young woman in Mozambique. The question is, with the existing tertiary institutions in Africa already overburdened, under-resourced, understaffed and run down, the major challenge is, how is Africa going to meet the demand for substantially higher numbers of graduates with significantly improved capabilities and entrepreneurial mindsets? This is where InnovATE can make a substantial change.

iii) The backbone of most African economies is the agricultural sector; improvements in this sector correlate positively to all major economic and social indicators such as economic development, foreign revenue, the labor market, food security, poverty alleviation and equity.

iv) The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) states that no country has become developed without well-educated people and a strong agricultural base that provides food security. The FAO acknowledges that good educational systems will not solve all problems, but they are a prerequisite for sustained agricultural production and economic development.

v) A study on education for agricultural productivity found that education had a significant positive impact on agricultural productivity worldwide. The effect can be considered sizeable—an additional year of schooling for the whole population could raise land productivity by approximately 3.2 percent (*Am. J. Agr. Econ. (2013) 95 (1): 131-152*). Rwanda, for example, has invested aggressively in tertiary education in recent years; the number of new graduates since 2006 is twice the number of graduates in the previous 44 years since independence. Now Rwanda's national food production for the same period shows a significant boost coinciding with the massive upgrading of human capital.

vi) On the supply side, the most striking fact is that only 2 percent of African students specialize in agriculture, even though agriculture contributes 32 percent of Africa's gross domestic product (GDP), compared to 1.4 percent in Europe. However, on the demand side, bright young people do not often choose to study agriculture. For most young Africans, agriculture is synonymous with poverty. This problem has been faced by other developing regions as well, so InnovATE can come with inferential market-leaning, technology-based AET curricula in cooperation with the agricultural institutions in Feed the Future Countries.

vii) Human capital in agriculture covers a diverse group of professionals, but InnovATE can select the major area(s) as per the declaration of the Summit and produce a sample output of CPCD and training modules for the continent.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

It is realized as firsthand information from the Summit that higher education in Africa is on high priority and demand driven on the entire continent, where InnovATE can play a vital role to make a desired change in agricultural education and training at all levels (school, college, university, and vocational school). The program of the Summit did not have any panel discussion or any concurrent session specifically on AET. However, the importance and urgency of inferential AET to turn agriculture into a major backbone of the economy and for the well-being of the agricultural labor force in Africa through university and vocational institutions was brought to attention during the Summit. In a special keynote speech, **H.E. Kofi Annan** highlighted the necessity of vocational education in Africa and that model can be copied from Switzerland and elsewhere. This particular message of the Summit to InnovATE has a great potential and the scope to improve the highly prioritized agricultural sector in Africa through AET. To make it happen, InnovATE should more closely work with TrustAfrica and the African Union to establish working relationships with lead agricultural institutions in the target countries to reform and/or develop comprehensive curricula and training modules on selected topics in cooperation with target audiences in each of the Feed the Future Countries. InnovATE should prioritize its sector e.g. technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and/or tertiary education and work on enhancing and strengthening human and institutional capacity. As a reference, the Swiss vocational training model and the German

resource allocation approach between University and technical school can be blended to develop an American AET model for Africa and Asia (developing countries).

Appendix:

Trip Log:

Monday, March 9th 2015. Arrived in Dakar at midnight

Tuesday, March 10th 2015. Attended the welcome and opening ceremony of the Summit

In the morning, I went to the Education and Research in Agriculture (ERA) office to get introduced to the staff before going to the King Fahd Palace Hotel, the venue of the Summit. The agenda of the inaugural ceremony (the first day) included registration that followed welcome remarks by **Ms. Aicha Bah Diallo**, Chair of TrustAfrica, the opening keynote address by **H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma**, Chairperson of The African Union Commission, and welcome and opening address by **H.E. Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal and Chair of The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Heads of State Orientation Committee. The inaugural ceremony followed the official reception.

Wednesday, March 11th 2015. Attended the inaugural ceremony of the Summit

The morning session kicked off with two Special Keynote addresses on the theme: Higher Education and Africa's Social, Economic and Political Progress

- 1) Dr. Vartan Gregorian**, President, Carnegie Corporation of New York, USA and
- 2) H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan**, Former Secretary General, United Nations, and Chair, Africa's Progress Panel

After a tea break, plenary panel discussions started. The following three panel discussions took place before parallel sessions were started:

Plenary Panel 1: Setting the Scene: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Plenary Panel 2: Ministerial Panel: Mobilizing Continental Leadership for Higher Education

Plenary Panel 3: High Level Panel: Investment in African Higher Education

After the three plenary panel discussions, parallel sessions took place as follows:

Session 1: Equity and Access

Session 2: Higher Education, Nation Building and Citizenship

Session 3: Harmonization of African Universities

Session 4: Differentiation and Diversification

After the parallel sessions the Official Summit Dinner took place. During the dinner there were two Special Keynote Addresses delivered by **H.E. Mohammed Dionne**, Prime Minister, The Republic of Senegal and **Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili**, Former Minister of Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Former Vice-President for Africa, World Bank. The theme of the keynote addresses was Building Universities for Africa's Future.

Thursday, March 12th 2015 (3rd day).

High Level Panel 2: Business, Higher Education and Graduate Employability

After the high level panel, parallel sessions took place as follows:

Session 5: Quality, Excellence and Relevance

Session 6: Higher Education and Gender

Session 7: Governance and Regulatory Regime of African Higher Education

Session 8: The Role of Research and Postgraduate Studies in African Higher Education

After the four concurrent sessions, a plenary session took place on: Science, Technology and Innovation

Finally, the Summit concluded with the Summit declaration on eight priority areas as follows:

1. We call for an ambitious commitment of various stakeholders **to expand higher Education.**
2. **Promote diversification, differentiation, and harmonization of higher education systems** at the national, institutional and continental/regional levels by African countries to enable consolidation and assure the quality of educational provision against locally, regionally, and internationally agreed upon benchmarks of excellence.
3. **Increase investment in higher education** to facilitate development, promote stability, enhance access and equity; develop, recruit and retain excellent academic staff; and pursue cutting-edge research and provision of high quality teaching. Appropriate investments are required at institutional, national, regional, and international levels.
4. African higher education institutions shall commit themselves to the **pursuit of excellence** in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, public service and provision of solutions to the development challenges and opportunities facing African people across the continent. Key actions are required by all stakeholders and levels to assure quality, relevance, and excellence.
5. Commit to building capacity in **Research, Science, Technology, and Innovation.**
6. Pursue national development through **business, higher education and graduate employability**: Despite the rapid expansion of higher education enrollments, there are serious concerns about the ability of Africa's universities to produce the kinds of graduates who can drive the continent forward.
7. **Nation building and democratic citizenship**: As enshrined in the relevant sections of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981 and in the AU's Agenda 2063, the continent seeks to deepen the culture of good governance, democratic values, gender equality, and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.
8. **Mobilize the Diaspora**: Develop a 10/10 program that sponsors 1,000 scholars in the African diaspora across all disciplines every year, for 10 years, to African universities and colleges for collaboration in research, curriculum development, and graduate student teaching and mentoring.

Friday, March 13th 2015 (4th day).

I participated in the final day of business planning and entrepreneurship development training. The weeklong training concluded with the presentations of business plans prepared by the participants. The training was jointly conducted by Tuskegee University (Youssouf Diabate and Henry Findlay) and the ERA Officials at Dakar.

At the workshop, I assisted Youssouf and Henry in evaluating the workshop. I also discussed with them the impact of the workshop on participants' knowledge and skills on business planning and entrepreneurship development, post-workshop publication needs for InnovATE on CPCD and BPED that can be used by the relevant institutions and individuals to conduct similar training workshops in the future. The Syllabus can be based on Senegalese AET and may be implemented across the continent over time.

Saturday, March 13th 2015 (5th day) flew back ...