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Supporting tertiary education, enhancing economic development.

Strategies for effective higher education funding in Sub-Saharan Africa

Marta Montanini

Abstract

The crucial function of higher education in the knowledge economy has been the object of various empirical demonstrations that succeeded in showing a strong correlation between higher education and GDP growth, through human capital development and technology diffusion. Nevertheless, a large number of factors can influence and limit higher education benefits such as countries' macro-economic structure, the given function of higher education in national poverty reduction strategies, the degree of universities independence and their responsiveness to local needs. In Sub-Saharan Africa a variety of international donors support tertiary education, emphasising or neglecting certain aspects depending on their nature and ultimate goals. In spite of their attempt of redefining cooperation paradigms, strengthening partnerships and improving projects sustainability, the issues of academic freedom, shared value definition or actions coordination and cohesiveness are still far to be achieved and sometimes addressed. This paper argues that international donors need to take the risk of exploring new solutions, following the paths that are being tracked by African scholars

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(*) The opinions expressed herein are strictly personal and do not necessarily reflect the position of ISPI.

*Who're these superior louts receiving higher education
– no tertiary eh, in our new dispensation –
sounds less discriminatory between high and low opportunity.*

N. Gordimer, *No time like the present*

Introduction

From the early 2000s, the key role of tertiary education within policies meant to promote or improve development has been progressively acknowledged, reversing the trends of the majority of the studies conducted in the 80s that gave absolute priority to support of primary education, basing their findings on the rate of return to investments in education. Beyond the direct economic and monetary return, scholars started to consider and try to evaluate others major benefits brought by higher education that affect society as a whole.

Since the World Bank-sponsored study of Bloom et al., *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa*¹ (2005), the crucial function of higher education in the knowledge economy has been the object of various empirical demonstrations that succeeded in showing a strong correlation between higher education and GDP growth, through human capital development and technology diffusion. The case of many Sub-Saharan African countries, where the extremely low rate of tertiary education enrolment and the critical conditions of universities coexist with high growth rates, demonstrate that human development is also a matter of appropriated policies. If there's a common consent on the positive role played by tertiary education for socio-economic development, it remains still difficult to determine how educational institutions, governments and private sector stakeholders must act together in order to create a development virtuous circle. A large number of factors can influence and limit the higher education benefits and some important issues need to be addressed. What kind of interaction adopt between universities, institutions, and society as a whole in order to achieve sustainable development? To what extent academic institutions can influence development strategies at the national and international level? What mechanisms can favour youth entrepreneurship and innovation, linking public and private sector? How far higher education must move from massification to excellence without worsening social inequalities? Are there tertiary education sectors that give a higher contribution to growth and development and does it exist a justified hierarchy between academic disciplines? Are there 'Sub-Saharan Africa's specificities' that must be taken into account? How do international programmes impact academic freedom, local research development and the intellectual responsibility of African scholars?

¹ D. BLOOM, D. CANNING and K. CHAN, *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa*, Harvard University, 2005.

Answering to these questions is an essential precondition to the definition of funding strategies and to assess their efficacy. Choosing between different forms of support means to identify major needings and emergencies and to push the recipients to follow a precise pathway of cooperation supposedly be more effective. The presence or absence of participatory dynamics in strategy definition, the focus on gender, on hard or soft skills, the minor or major attention to teaching teams or to students, the stress on quality assurance or on the revision of study curricula are elements through which is possible to diversify and characterise the different actions, understanding which sensitive point of the educational chain donors and recipients consider more relevant and in needings to be strengthened and developed.

A variety of international donors support tertiary education emphasising or neglecting some aspects depending on their nature, their sensitiveness, their ultimate scope. Those actions, far from been homogeneous, nevertheless adopted the global approach to development as a multi-stakeholder process in which human capital and technology play a central role. This broader conception should bring donors to plan their actions taking into consideration a larger dimension, that consider the function performed by higher education in national development strategies and that cannot disregard private sector and the transformative role of education on society.

The first chapter of this paper presents an overview on the situation of higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting the major concerns, and addressing the relation between tertiary education and development. The second chapter focuses on the assessment of tertiary education funding strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa, analysing some best practices carried out by organisations that acknowledge the idea of higher education as a development engine and support it in an innovative way.

1. Tertiary education in Sub-Saharan Africa: an overview

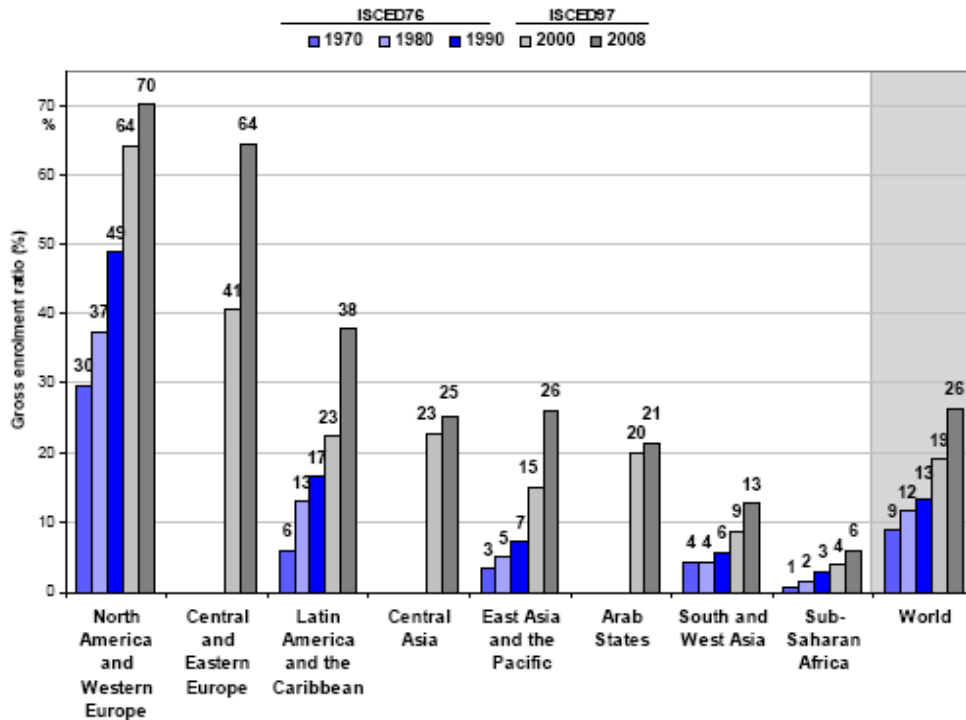
Africa scores the lowest higher education participation rate in the world. The average gross rate of tertiary education enrolment (GER) was 8% in 2011 (5% if considering only the female rate and 8% considering only the male rate²). This range differs from country to country, For instance, in 2009 the tertiary GER exceeds the regional average in the following countries: Cameroon (9.0%), Cape Verde (14.9%), Côte d'Ivoire (8.4%), Guinea (9.2%), Mauritius (25.9%), Namibia (8.9%) and Senegal (8.0%). However, the ratio remains quite low in countries such as: Burkina Faso (3.4%), Burundi (2.7%), Central African Republic (2.5%), Chad (2.0%), Eritrea (2.0%), Ethiopia (3.6%), Madagascar (3.6%), Malawi (0.5%), Niger (1.4%) and Uganda (3.7%)³. The tertiary

² World Bank database.

³ Datas from UNESCO, *Trends in tertiary education: Sub-Saharan Africa*, UIS Facts Sheet, No. 10, 2010.

gross enrollment ratio for Anglophone countries averaged 6.7%, in comparison to the 2.9% that characterized Francophone nations⁴.

Tertiary gross enrolment ratios by region 1970 to 2008



Source: UNESCO, *Trends in tertiary education: Sub-Saharan Africa*, UIS Facts Sheet, No. 10, 2010.

At the same time Sub-Saharan Africa reaches the highest annual growth rate: *enrolment in tertiary education grew faster in sub-Saharan Africa than in any other region over the last four decades. While there were fewer than 200,000 tertiary students enrolled in the region in 1970, this number soared to over 4.5 million in 2008 – a more than 20-fold increase. In effect, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for tertiary education grew at an average rate of 8.6% for each year between 1970 and 2008 – compared to a global average of 4.6% over the same period*⁵.

As in 2008, the tertiary GER reached 6%, compared to 27% for upper secondary education⁶, analysts talk about a growing pressure on tertiary education: undoubtedly there will be more and more students that will be eligible for higher education but many of them won't succeed in accessing to it. According to the projections, Sub-Saharan Afri-

⁴ Datas from G. AZCONA, R. CHUTE, F. DIB, L. DOOKHONY, H. KLEIN, D. LOYACANO-PERL DANIEL, D. RANDAZZO, V. REILLY, *Harvesting the Future: The Case for Tertiary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, The Maxwell School of Syracuse University, 2008.

⁵ UNESCO, op. cit., p. 1.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

ca will experience a unique demographic transition, with an estimated 258 million Africans expected to reach prime working age (15 -24 years) by 2025⁷. UNESCO talks about an “explosive growth” to which African universities must be prepared.

Public universities have doubled from roughly 100 to nearly 200 between 1990 and 2007, and the number of private tertiary institutions increased during the same period, from two dozen to an estimated 468⁸. However African universities are unable to absorb the increasing demand for tertiary education. This ‘excess of demand’, coupled with lack of resources and underfunding, resulted in overcrowded classrooms, limited student-access to computers and basic equipment, deterioration of buildings, less support for research. Underlining the importance of being competitive on the knowledge market, the World Bank recommended to African governments to reduce higher education costs, and called for a major responsibility of universities in cost coverage. The UNESCO-commissioned study “Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution” notices: *funding shortages due to massification have also meant that higher education systems and institutions are increasingly responsible for generating larger percentages of their own revenue. The worldwide surge in private higher education and the financing models for this sector have important implications for students and society. These trends have generally led to increasing austerity in universities and other postsecondary institutions*⁹. Universities are trying to balance the introduction of tuitions fees and the necessity of granting the access to women and young students in need: Uganda’s Makerere University provides full scholarship to qualified and needy students and allows other students to pay tuition expenses to attend, Ghana’s loan system recoups loans through contributions to the national social security plan following graduation. Universities have also introduced outsourcing activities.

The percentage of postgraduate enrollment remains relatively low in all countries: 15% in South Africa, 7% in Nigeria, and 4% in Ghana¹⁰. Sub-Saharan African countries suffer from a real shortage of academic staff due to limited postgraduate opportunities, low graduation rates and discouraging conditions of service. African universities contribute to 3% to the global scholarly literature¹¹. In the case of Ethiopia academic lecturers with doctoral degrees or equivalent terminal training decreased from 28% in the 1995-1996 to 17% in 1999, and to 9% in the 2002-2003 academic year¹². In 2008 doctoral stu-

⁷ AAVV, *Harvesting the future*, p. 30.

⁸ Y. SHAHID YUSUF, W. SAINT, and N. KAORU, *Accelerating Catch-up Tertiary Education for Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa*, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Washington DC, 2009.

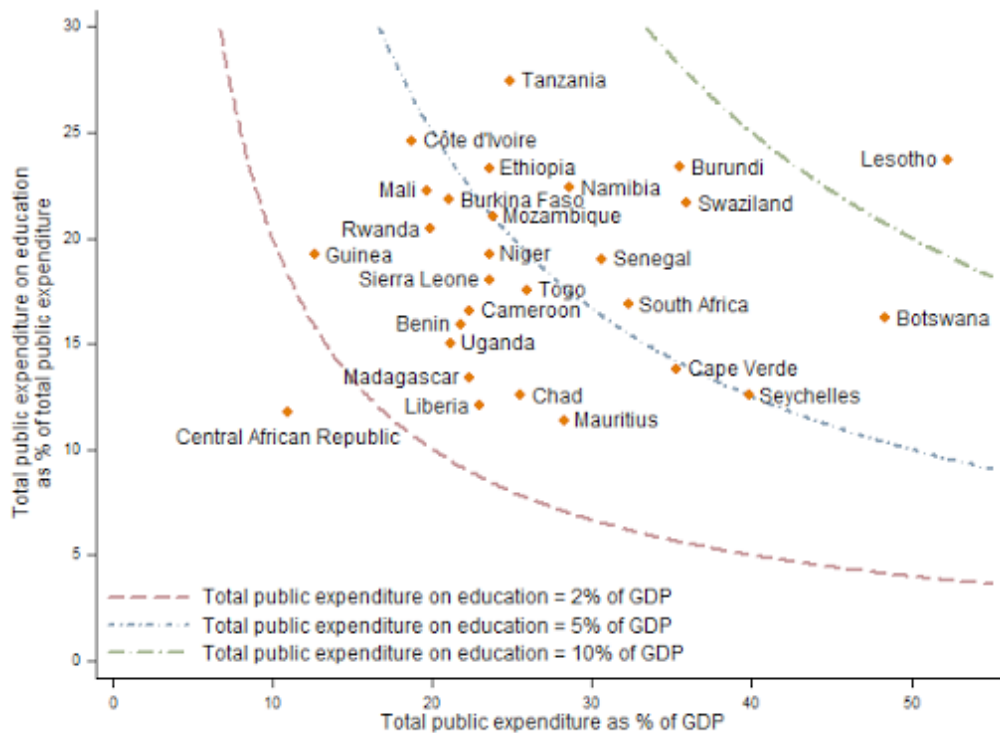
⁹ P. ALTBACH, L. REISBERG, L. RUMBLEY, *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution*, UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, 2009, p. 11.

¹⁰ J. TETTEY WINSDOM, *Postgraduate Studies in Africa: The Looming Crisis*, in ‘International Higher Education’, No. 57, 2009, p. 13.

¹¹ P. OKEBUKOLA, *Quality Assurance in Higher Education: The African Story of Achievements and Outstanding Needs*, Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI)-Africa, CHEA-2012.

¹² W. SAINT, *Innovation Funds for Higher Education: A Users’ Guide for World Bank Funded Projects*, Education Working Paper Series, No. 1, World Bank, 2006.

dents at the University of Ghana stood at only 6% of total postgraduate enrollment, a marginal increase from the 2000 figure of 5%¹³. The proportion at the University of Kwazulu-Natal went up from 7% in 2000 to 10% in 2005¹⁴. The proportion of doctoral-level enrollments among postgraduate students in South Africa, stagnated at 1% between 2000 and 2006¹⁵.



Source: F. HUEBLER, huebler, blogspot.com, May 2011

The deterioration of tertiary education institutions has a dramatic effect: students and academic staff leave for other, more promising, countries. The capacity of retention of African universities decreases with quality worsening. According to the International Organization of Migration, between 1990 and 2004, Africa lost about 20,000 professionals a year¹⁶. In 2008, about 223,000 students from sub-Saharan Africa were enrolled in tertiary education institutions outside of their home countries¹⁷. They represented 7.5% of the total number of mobile students (3.0 million) around the world (and 4.9% of students enrolled in domestic tertiary institutions in correspondent home countries)¹⁸. UNESCO high-

¹³ J. TETTEY WINSDOM, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ Quoted by A. TEBEJE, *Brain Drain and capacity building in Africa*, IDRC, <http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/Pages/ArticleDetails.aspx?PublicationID=70>.

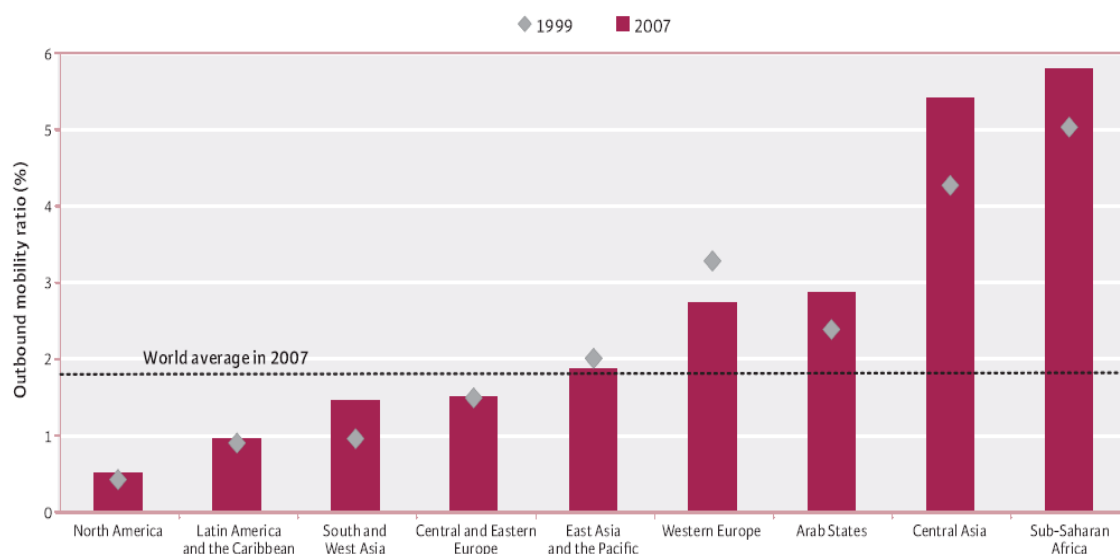
¹⁷ UNESCO, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

lights that the countries with small populations tend to have the largest proportions of students abroad. For countries such as Botswana, Cape Verde, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia and Swaziland, it might be more cost effective to take advantage of the extensive tertiary education opportunities available in South Africa or other countries, rather than offering these programmes through their domestic education systems (even if, as a costly consequence, many students decide not to come back). Emigration rate of tertiary educated students (% of total tertiary educated population) in Sub-Saharan Africa was 12.6% in 2010¹⁹. Brain drain makes the replenishing of academic and professional functions extremely difficult and represents an enormous economic loss (40% of African wealth²⁰), even if it's in part compensated by remittances.

Even the students' mobility among African universities should be better defined, finding common criteria for an international classification (e.g. Francophone and Anglophone universities differ in programmes, incentives to teachers, etc.). In this sense, the integration into the Bologna Process represents a major challenge.

Number of mobile students from a given region as a percentage of tertiary enrolment in that region (outbound mobility ratio), 1999 and 2007



Source: P. OKEBUKOLA, *Quality Assurance in Higher Education: The African Story of Achievements and Outstanding Needs*, Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI)-Africa, CHEA-2012.

The World Bank highlights the permanence of socio-economics inequalities: on average a student from the lowest socio-economic quintile has 15 times less chance of entering a university than one from the highest quintile. In Chad, 92% of university stu-

¹⁹ World Bank database.

²⁰ B.J. NDULU, *Human Capital Flight: Stratification, Globalization and the Challenges to Tertiary Education in Africa*, World Bank.

dents come from the top quintile. In Burundi, the 2% of students who attain higher education are benefited by 40% of education sector expenditures²¹. In Malawi, enrolment in tertiary education is associated almost exclusively with households from the richest 10% of the population²². Inequities concerns also language, ethnicity, geographical origins (for instance young people coming from rural areas represent a minority in the students' cohort) and gender.

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, there are only about 62 female students for every 100 male students²³. The enrolment rate differs from men and women (8% versus 5%), who face significant barriers in countries with low levels of wealth as Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Niger and Chad. On the contrary, countries with high level of wealth are characterized by fewer disparities (and in some of them enrolled women are more than men, for instance Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Capo Verde). From the 90s many progresses have been achieved in girls access: for example the government of Tanzania has attempted to correct gender inequalities by creating a special pre-entry program that has helped lead to an increase in women's enrollment from 7.5% in 2003 to 23% in 2006²⁴. Ghana, Kenya, Uganda started similar programs.

Gender disparity is also reflected in teaching teams: women access to highest academic position is still very limited and female researchers' publications are scarce. In 2009 the percentage of tertiary education teachers female was 21%²⁵.

In these last years, the differentiation of tertiary education in Africa has increased, and the number of private technical schools, colleges and polytechnics multiplied. This differentiation doesn't always mean better quality; nevertheless it has enlarged the possibilities of accessing higher education.

The best way to push educational institutions to achieve good and proved quality rates is by improving the government accreditation system. Creating a good national system of quality assurance enforces the administrative capacity of African universities, and gives impulse to the renewal of didactic and pedagogical contents and tolls. Better quality can be also attained through the planning of a more efficient articulation process

²¹ M. BROSSARD, B. FOKO, *L'Enseignement Supérieur En Afrique Francophone: Coûts Et Financement Et Perspectives De Développement Dans Une Logique De Soutenabilité Budgétaire*, UNESCO-BREDA, Dakar, 2006.

²² WORLD BANK, *Cost, Financing and School Effectiveness in Malawi: Country Status Report*, Africa Region Human Development Department Working Paper 78, World Bank, 2004.

²³ World Bank database.

²⁴ P. MSOLLA, *Issues of Higher Education in Tanzania*. Public address, World Bank Resources, 2006.

²⁵ World Bank database.

between secondary and tertiary institutions²⁶ (by introducing entrance exams, but also bridges and make-up courses).

Therefore, quality improvement can be enhanced by closing the gap between universities and labour market. Although the very high rate of Sub-Saharan youth unemployment is due to macroeconomic factors like production structure, prevalence of informal sector or complex business environment, skills mismatching and lack of information worsen the already difficult situation of graduate students.

The insufficiency of financial resources remains the key problem of educational institutions, limiting their potential of innovation, development and social change. In 2008 a SADC commissioned study found that *funding levels seem to have remained relatively unchanged over the previous ten-year period and there was little evidence of private sector support for higher education. The study also highlighted the limited extent to which higher education institutions in the SADC region were generating third-stream income or making use of donor funding that is not channeled through governments*²⁷.

Educational challenges at regional-national and institutional level in SADC countries	
Regional level	No consistent terminology; lack of comparable data; lack of systematic co-operation initiatives; diverse forms of qualifications and governance mechanisms; different policies; different frameworks; insufficient collaboration; different language contexts; need for increased mobility; lack of commonly agreed objectives/aims or (where they are agreed e.g. in the SADC Protocol) their lack of implementation; and lack of harmonised strategies.
National level	Absence of funding and appropriate funding mechanisms (e.g. no formula for allocation or earmarked funds); poor ICT infrastructure; lack of planning capacity; lack of policy and regulatory capacity; science systems; poor and outdated research infrastructure.
Institutional level	Capacity development needed at all levels: student access; student success; postgraduate enrolment; staff attraction; retention and development; research development; community engagement; infrastructure and resourcing; curriculum.

Source: P. KOTECHA, *Higher Education in the Southern African Region: Current trends, challenges, and recommendations*, CEO, Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), 2012

²⁶ See K. KINYANJUI, G. AFETI, *Preparing Knowledge Workers for Africa's Development: Articulating Upper Secondary with Higher Education*, ADEA Biennale on Education in Africa: Beyond Primary Education, 2008.

²⁷ P. KOTECHA, *Higher Education in the Southern African Region: Current trends, challenges, and recommendations* CEO, Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), 2012.

Some of the African responses to Tertiary Education needs:

Access: Makerere University in Uganda runs a multi-approach program of women empowerment and has a Gender Studies department. In Ghana the government has created the Untrained Teacher Training program (UTT) to educate the estimated 10% of current teachers practicing in rural areas. In Ethiopia, the government has recognized the need to increase rural enrolment and has implemented a positive discrimination policy for students from the “relatively underserved” regions.

Quality Assurance: In 2008 the African Union Commission created the Pan African University (PAU). The PAU involves the promotion, networking and development of programmes and research centres within selected existing high quality universities in the five geographic sub-regions, namely: Northern, Western, Eastern, Central Northern and Southern Africa. Each sub-region will host a thematic component of the PAU which will be committed to select and to network high quality centres developing similar programs and to serve as a coordinating hub for those institutions; African Quality Rating Mechanism for Higher Education (AQRM) was developed by the African Union Commission as part of the African Union’s strategy for harmonising higher education, and was adopted by the Conference of Ministers of Education of Africa in 2007. Its aim is to revitalise and strengthen African higher education institutions to ensure that they are globally competitive and attractive while being locally relevant. It is also intended as a tool to facilitate benchmarking of quality and to promote a culture of ongoing quality improvement in higher education. The AQRM was launched in 2010.

Research/Networks: The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar (www.codesria.org); African economy research consortium (www.aercafrica.org); Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) (www.ossrea.net); the Working Group for Higher Education (WGHE) in Ghana; the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), Uganda (www.iuciea.org); African Association For Political Science (AAPS); the Southern African Regional Institute for Policy Studies (SARIPS); Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) (www.ruforum.org); the African Virtual University (AVU). NRENs (National Research and Education Network) already exist in Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia, Zimbabwe and Madagascar.

Brain drain reduction: The African Network of Scientific and Technical Institutions offers conference grants and Post Doctoral Grants to African students and scholars (www.ansti.org).

Labour market and private sector linkage: The Universities of Yaounde and Douala in Cameroun and Cheik anta Diop in Senegal manage Hubs for enterprises’ start-up.

Structural Reforms: Post Secondary Education Project in Mauritania and Mozambique; Higher education project in Ethiopia, Millennium Science Initiative in Uganda (creation of innovation funds - universities diversification and autonomy); (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects>).

2. Higher education as a key to economic development

2.1 Inception and adjustment of the World Bank paradigm

The understanding of the role of higher education in national development changed through history. Just after the independence period, African universities were considered essential to nation building and development as they were a privileged source of human capital for leadership and public profession formation. In 1972, the Association of African Universities was the first to highlight the role of higher education in development, as demonstrated by the well-known “Accra declaration” which states the importance that all the universities become ‘development university’²⁸. Despite the resounding declarations of decolonisation leaders, *de facto* higher education institutions and governments didn’t succeed in finding a common pattern. From one side, governments tended to fear and control more than support universities, and, from the other side, universities became opposition and protest bulwarks, claiming their independence. During the 80s, the lack of resources accorded to tertiary education at national level, was accompanied by the World Bank sponsored studies based on the rate of return to investments in education prioritizing a funding allocation that would decisively favor primary education²⁹. In the 1990s and early 2000s, following a renovated interest for human development and socio-economic rights, new studies revisited the relation between higher education and development, and even the World Bank realigned its point of view, promoting researches that would demonstrate the clear relation between GDP growth and investments in tertiary education.

In 2006 the then former Secretary General of UN Kofi Annan argued that *university must become a primary tool for Africa’s development in the new century* and the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in 2009 strengthened this ambitious and promising vision. The CHET/HERANA book of 2011 “Universities and Economic Development in Africa” analyses the discourse on the role of university identifying two different points of view. The first one sees universities as ‘development tool’: *this ‘direct’ instrumentalist notion assumes that universities have a concentration (surplus) of expertise, and presumably spare time, that must be applied directly, or in partnership, to pressing socio-economic issues, such as poverty, disease, governance and the competitiveness of private firms or companies*. The second one calls for universities to be ‘engine of development’ and it’s based on *strengthening knowledge production and the role of universities in innovation processes*³⁰. If university is conceived as a service deliver, its contribution to national development strategies won’t be extremely high and university will have an ancillary or instrumental position. But if national development

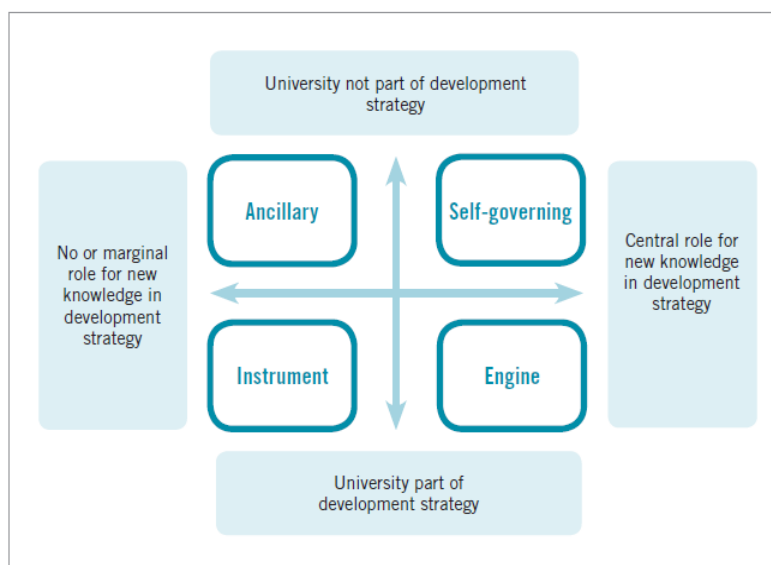
²⁸ See Yusufu, quoted in A. WANDIRA, *The African university in development*, Raven Press, 1977.

²⁹ G. PSACHAROPOULOUS *The Financing of Education in Developing Countries: Exploration of Policy Options* (with J.P. TAN and E. JIMENEZ), The World Bank, 1986.

³⁰ T. BAILEY, I. BUNTING, N. CLOETE, P. PUNDY, M. PEATER, *University and economic development in Africa*, CHET, Wynberg, 2011, p. 6.

strategy is based on new knowledge and innovation, university will play a boosting role, being recognized as one of the main actors of development.

The four notions of the role of knowledge and universities in development



Source: T.BAILEY, N. Cloete and P.Pillay, University and economic development in Africa, CHET, 2011.

The participation of higher education in national development strategies is conditioned by the kind of relation established between educational institutions, government and civil society and by the mission that education stakeholders assume, but it's also highly dependent on other external circumstances such as the structure of the economic system, the incidence of political tradition, the organisation of private sector.

The World Bank study "Accelerating Catch-up: Tertiary Education for Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa"³¹ argues: *tertiary institutions will need to consciously and persistently transform themselves into a different type of educational enterprise: networked, differentiated, and responsive institutions focused on the production of strategically needed human skills and applied problem-solving research. If achieved, this would constitute a twenty-first century version of the African "development university" (...) tertiary institutions are now becoming strategic national assets that can be steered and enabled by government policy to advance the national interest within the competitive dynamics of globalization (...) it is now far more appropriate for governments, together with their stakeholders and development partners to seek country-specific solutions to the challenges of linking human resource development strategies with economic growth strate-*

³¹ Y. SHAHID, W. SAINT, and N. KAORU, *Accelerating Catch-up Tertiary Education for Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa*, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Washington DC, 2009.

gies. In these three paragraphs the study summarizes the role and the function that, according to the World Bank findings, higher education should perform to enhance economic development. In contemporary knowledge economy tertiary education is conceived as the ultimate source of knowledge and innovation, as it must be a human capital provider and must solve local problems through local solutions. A strong accent is put on the ability of educational institutions to be highly responsive, showing a proved capacity to identify strategic needs and to develop relevant human skills.

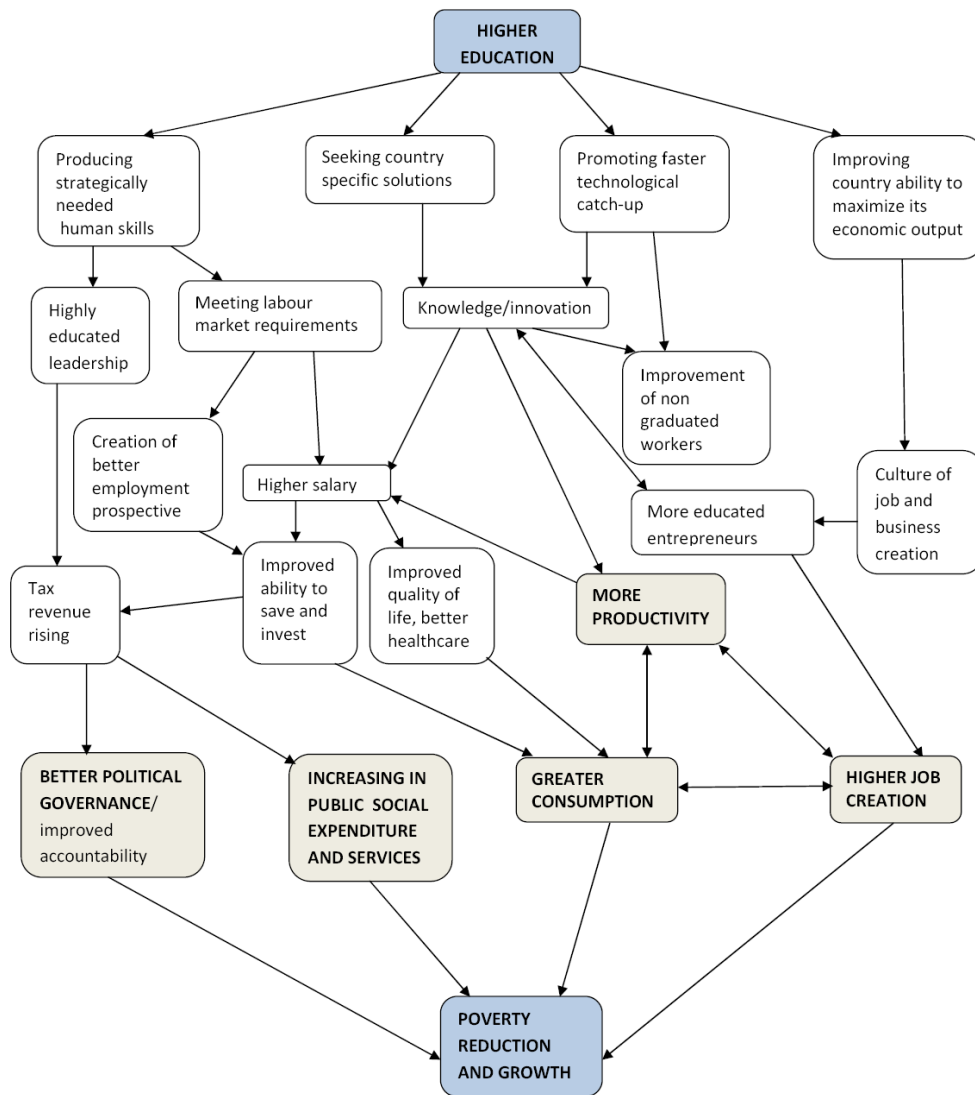
The World Bank sponsored the study of Bloom *et al.*, "Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa"³² underlines how the major benefits of higher education have been neglected by the studies based on the rate of investments return, that didn't take into consideration externalities or spillover benefits. According to these authors, when university is able to identify the hard and soft skills required by the market and the technical expertise to address the country problems, the increased human capital, through innovation, can accelerate technological catch-up and boost science technology and innovation dissemination. More skilled workers, managed by more skilled entrepreneurs, increase productivity rates and are rewarded with higher salaries. At private level, getting a higher salary means improving the quality of life (for example in terms of better healthcare) and, most of all, increasing the capacity of saving and investing, making consumption growth. At the same time, at a public level, higher incomes have a positive effects on tax revenues, which increment social expenditure and services. Quality higher education develops entrepreneurship and leadership, fostering and encouraging the creation of new business. Bloom's researches have also demonstrated that higher education has an impact on governance and business management as educated leaderships seems to be more transparent and more equipped with ethics principles, diminishing the risk of corruption³³. Bloom discussed founding go further proving that higher education can reduce ethnic tensions and support a better management of diversity³⁴.

³² D. BLOOM, D. CANNING, and K. CHAN, *op. cit.*

³³ Even if in T. EICHER, C. GARCÍA-PENALOSA, T. VAN YPERSELE, *Education, Corruption, and the Distribution of Income*, University of Washington, GREQAM, CNRS, 2006, the authors demonstrated that the relation higher education increment-corruption decreasing is not as monolithic as it has been showed, but it's also conditioned by other factors like income, presence of skilled job, and quality of democracy.

³⁴ D. BLOOM, M. HARTLEY, H. ROSOVSKY, *Social benefits of higher education*, 2004.

Major benefit of higher education according to Bloom's findings



Source: Author elaboration

Nevertheless, the majority of the econometric studies, agreed in asserting that *it is vital that the social, political, and economic structures and the technological level of the society to which the educational system belongs are such that graduates can actually make use of their accumulated knowledge*³⁵. As Bloom argues: *higher education will*

³⁵ J.L. DE MEULEMEESTER and D. ROCHAT, *A causality analysis of the link between higher education and economic development*, 'Economics of Education Review' (14) 4, 1996 quoted in D. BLOOM, D. CANNING, and K.Chan, *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa*, Harvard University, 2005.

*not make a difference in Africa if other barriers to development play a determinative and negative role. Without sensible macroeconomic management, for example, new graduates will be much less likely to find productive work (...) higher education creates the potential, but governments and private actors must seize the opportunities*³⁶.

The findings on higher education spillover benefits don't take into account different factors, belonging to the economic structure and to system inadequacy, that in Sub-Saharan Africa (but the same could be said for some 'higher developed' European economy) restraint higher education impact on development. Undoubtedly the export-commodities oriented economies of the majority of the African countries are characterized by an over dependence from few industries and by a highly capital intensive profile. These kind of economies are centred on urban bases, defecting rural areas. Open and disguised unemployment high rates are the consequence of an employment-poor model of growth and of a business environment characterized by lack of regulatory framework, weak infrastructure, expensive licensing requirements, inadequate advice on access business, unfair recruitment practices, clientelism and a low-level of productivity. The education system is not only confronted with this situation, but in some way it contributes to its maintenance. In most cases education is underfunded and unequipped, incapable of creating relevant entrepreneurship and give a boost to business development through a radical improvement of technical skills. In the regional report "Africa's Response to the youth employment crisis"³⁷ ILO underlines the importance of building public-private partnerships and of reaching out marginalised youth through an efficient information system. The weakness, or the absence, of employ information systems depends on the lack of regular researches on market labour, and the reduced knowledge of employment issues limits the development of organisations capable to support youth integration into economy and to promote counselling activities. The access and the creation of relevant entrepreneurship training and work placement internship are also reduced and impeded by scarce information and low dissemination.

According to the World Bank vision, a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approach is needed but nothing can be achieved without integrating education in the national development agenda and, moreover, without the willingness of pursuing an employment-rich growth and the creation of a growth-promoting industrial system. In the last years African governments have started to integrate higher education in their poverty reduction strategy papers (that's the case of Mozambique, Ethiopia, Ghana and Uganda), but there's still some reticence in establishing and following a clear roadmap. Making more effective higher education institutions means to reform their internal structure and, at the same time, give them the meanings to outreach the merely educational aspect in order to be able to meet the needing of public and private sector. Those neces-

³⁶ D. BLOOM, D. CANNING, and K. CHAN, *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa*, Harvard University, 2005, p. 31.

³⁷ ILO, *Africa's Response to the youth employment crisis*, Regional Report, Synthesis of Key Issues and Outcomes from Eleven National Events on Youth Employment in the African region, March - May 2012.

sary reforms must deal with the difficult balance between universities autonomy and independence and government policies in education and teaching. Tertiary education providers often tend to be conservative, especially regarding their administrative councils and their ultimate mission.

Considering the lack of resources proper of most of African governments, the World Bank recommends different policies in order to strengthen the sectors that could improve higher education systems and have a larger incidence on poverty reduction. African economies good performances depends on the current global higher demand of commodities. To profit from this favourable moment, African governments should invest on new industries and more productive jobs, trying to reach new and less overcrowded markets (for example focusing on tradable services like ICTs, or processing more natural resources and developing the related industrial system). For this reason the World Bank focuses on the importance of economic diversification: to be competitive in the world knowledge economy, African countries must reach higher quality standard and technological scaling, by pursuing innovation and aiming at excellence at a regional level. According to this vision, countries with little resources should focus on a small number of priorities, concentrating their efforts in supporting the sectors that can be consider vital for economic development, at expenses of less promising disciplines. This process cannot be effective without relevant research activities, whose positive impact on economy have often been underestimated. Governments and educational institutions must promote and orient research by *a positive incentive system that rewards the systemic changes desired*³⁸. Publication and scientific production must be boosted, even with the help of private funding and partnerships. Researching activities, once attained a postgraduate position, cannot be only a matter of prestige, but must be perceived as the core of universities function, by being adequately rewarded and by enhancing competition. If, from one side, investments in research need to be increased, on the other side university must make use of low-cost methods of education delivery, preferring ICT-supported arrangements and reforming the teaching system in a more flexible direction. Increasing tuitions fees for the highest income students can be another way to reduce major costs.

Private sector plays a key role in the development of technology and innovation, but technology demand must be firstly boosted at a public level: governments must promote policies that *would ensure an adequate return to skills and induce firms to climb the technology value while strengthen the governance and autonomy of tertiary institutions and stimulate competition among them on a national and even regional basis*³⁹. Universities competition can also be strengthened by performances and outcomes rewards. The creation of sector associations can favour an homogeneous formation of members and a better coordination for a virtuous advocacy, while public-private partnership must be en-

³⁸ Y. SHAHID, W. SAINT, and N. KAORU, op. cit., p. 106.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

couraged in order to deliver a better training to graduated students, meeting market requirements and indirectly reducing brain drain. If knowledge can be a key access to economic growth, then students aren't represented anymore only by the young components of the populations, as far as adults need a continuous formation and enjoy the opportunity of access to higher education at different moment during their life.

The World Bank welcomes the creation of regional centres for excellence, science parks, high-tech start-ups and all the activities that would favour business creation and acceleration. Even tertiary education system itself must be diversified in order to provide the growing range of specializations needed for economic and social development and allow students from different background to be able to access higher education from multiple entry points. The issue of higher education institutions accountability is crucial: universities must implement quality assurance mechanisms, that guarantee transparency, fairness, equity, and accredited certifications.

2.2 Universities as main actors of social change

Despite the attempt of this economic oriented vision of being the most inclusive possible, certain aspects escape a merely econometric measure and remain unexplored. If the role of university in economic development has been generally defined, the implications of education in social development and leadership formation haven't been taken into right consideration.

Tertiary education institutions have a paramount effect in the reproduction of social structures, which means that, as places of knowledge transmission, universities can play a transformative role. Educational spaces are places of experimentation, social innovation and critical analysis and deconstruction. The vision that reduce universities to technical skills delivers recalls the colonial times in which higher education had the only aim of forming local functionaries, equipping them with functional tools for practical purposes. Beside the undeniable function of higher education as development engine, universities must being encouraged in performing their vigilant and shaping role on politics and society. As Coombe underlines: *the universities remain great national storehouses of trained, informed, inquiring and critical intellects, and the indispensable means of replenishing national talent. They have considerable reserves of leadership and commitment on which to draw. Impoverished, frustrated, dilapidated and overcrowded as they may be, they have no substitutes*⁴⁰. Despite all difficulties and alarming conditions, universities are still centres of intellectual production, whose critical potential can encompass limited freedom and lack of resources.

⁴⁰ T. COOMBE, *A Consultation on Higher Education in Africa: A Report to the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation*. New York, Ford Foundation. 1991 quoted in N'DRI ASSIÉ-LUMUMBA, *Empowerment of Women in Higher Education in Africa: The Role and Mission of Research*, UNESCO Forum Occasional Paper, Series Paper No. 11, 2006.

The high dependence on international donors funding limits the selection of academic research topics and doesn't often favour scientific debate, as it directs scholars and students towards overexploited subjects that have higher probability to be supported by international projects respecting as far as possible the local mark. African scholars claim for a renewal of study curriculum and didactic methods that must reflect local needs. These deep reforms cannot be achieved unless international and national support doesn't focus more on research autonomy than on research monitoring and orientation.

Equality is another issue that isn't enough quoted in econometric studies on higher education and development. If, in many cases, the massification of education ended up being extremely expensive for universities, that allowed over-benefit to students (free housing, free meals etc.), the World Bank policies to lower higher education public costs are having a negative impact on access policies, especially regarding female education (as some universities promoted women enrolment by fees reduction). In addition to that, few universities are addressing the under-representation of women in teaching and researching⁴¹. N'Dri Assié-Lumumba notices that *contrary to widespread perception and assumption, technology is not gender-neutral. Thus access to, and utilization of technology will reflect major societal values. In Africa, based on misconception, women students tend not to enrol in fields of Science, Technology, Engineering*⁴². Technology diffusion is linked to social changes, and an efficient development strategy must take in account related cultural aspects. The discourse on development seems to forget women involvement⁴³.

In Uganda, the Pluralism Knowledge Program analysed the potential of African universities as 'pluralism managers'⁴⁴. Universities are spaces in which diversities must coexist and cooperate. Disable students, young people from different religions, believing, languages, countries and social classes have the possibility to learn how to establish a common pattern of mutual respect, dialogue and knowledge. *Higher education institutions act as the cauldron in which social change is conceived, nurtured and presented. These can at times provide explosive spaces, as different perspectives interact, occasionally violently, while giving to the student the previously unexplored freedom of public expression and formulation of new identities in a 'free' environment*⁴⁵. This precious opportunity should be caught and promoted through specific policies aiming at transforming daily confrontation into a permanent positive recognition.

⁴¹ No woman contributed any article from special and public libraries while there was a relative gender mixture in academic libraries and library schools. There is a need to encourage female publication output in all sectors of Librarianship and Information Science in Africa. ATINMO and JIMBA, 2002, abstract, www.emeraldinsight.com/10.1108/00242530210446935, quoted in N'DRI ASSIÉ-LUMUMBA, op. cit., p. 29

⁴² N'DRI ASSIÉ-LUMUMBA, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴³ T. MOJA, *Politics of Exclusion in Higher Education: the Inadequacy of Gender Issues in the Globalization Debates*, 2007, quoted in N'DRI ASSIÉ-LUMUMBA, op. cit., p. 39.

⁴⁴ K. VUSIA SANTA IZAMA, *Managing diversity in African Universities*, Pluralism Working Paper No. 11, The Pluralism Knowledge Program, 2013.

⁴⁵ K. VUSIA SANTA IZAMA, op. cit., p. 12.

In the lecture *Towards Re-Africanizing African Universities: Who Killed Intellectualism in the Post Colonial Era?*⁴⁶, Ali Mazrui argues that *university has to be politically distant from the state; secondly, a university has also to be culturally close to society; and thirdly, a university has to be intellectually linked to wider scholarly and scientific values of the world of learning*⁴⁷. But often in Africa intellectual proximity to global scholarship clashes with cultural proximity to African society. Using European languages is the only way to have a place in the international knowledge fora, but at the same time it separates African scholars from their national context. According to Mazrui, African universities must renovate their relationship with national languages, and, at the same time, need to transform themselves in *multicultural corporations* that are able to diversify their cultural references and choose, time by time, the best model they want to follow. Even disciplinary categories could be rethought, to better respond to African realities. African universities should adopt a 'counter-penetration' strategy: African scholars and the African diaspora should export their winning models, influencing and competing with western paradigms.

3. Assessing tertiary education funding strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa

3.1 International donors' strategies and actions

Higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa is funded by different international public and private donors. The public donors can be identify as international organizations, development banks and organizations for bilateral cooperation between countries. UNESCO, in the survey "Youth and skills: Putting education to work, Private Philanthropy & Social Investments in Support of Education for All"⁴⁸, classified private donors in companies, foundations, billionaires and others additional entities. Concerning public donors, the World Bank is the dominant institution: in 2008 the funding amounted to USD 500 million. Among private donors, the Partnership for Higher education in Africa (PHEA) made by seven foundations (Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation) was the largest donor institution for ten years, until it closed in 2010. Other important foundations are the Carnegie Corporation of New York that allocates \$20 annually, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (about \$8.2 in five years.), the Gates Foundation, the Wellcome Trust of the U.K., and the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada.

Most of the time, international donors funding is channeled by local no-profit organizations and international NGOs with headquarters in developing countries and quite often

⁴⁶ A. MAZRUI, *Towards Re-Africanizing African Universities: Who Killed Intellectualism in the Post Colonial Era?*, in 'Alternatives', No. 3-4, Vol. 2, 2008.

⁴⁷ A. MAZRUI, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

⁴⁸ UNESCO, *Youth and skills: Putting education to work, Private Philanthropy & Social Investments in Support of Education for All*, UNESCO, 2012.

by multilateral institutions. NGOs can be in turn grant-makers and grant-seekers. UNESCO notices how, even when donors declare to directly fund governments, the funding is channeled through a third organization. An interesting study of Danish Development Research Network and Universities explains how *the most common models have continued to rely on funding cycles set by the donors, whether under the rubric of Official Development Assistance (ODA) or via contractual arrangements with an outside institution.(...) The donors have been generally slow and often unwilling to change the models by which they operate*⁴⁹. Despite the attempts of building sustainable projects, most of donors are still basing their supporting system on short term funding cycles, that don't favour the ownership of the recipients, and that limit the autonomous decisions of universities in term of management. Recently, certain donors have opted for investor and trust fund models, which enlarge the possibilities of making long-terms plans and ensure a major possibility of choice to recipients.

Concerning the forms of support, the above-mentioned UNESCO paper identifies: *in-kind contributions, direct service providing, policy engagement or funding*⁵⁰. Obviously each donor can adopt different forms of support at the same time. In-kind contributions and direct service providing are the most common forms of support between companies, while policy engagement and funding are more often associated with foundations or bilateral donors. Policy engagement can imply participation in international or domestic policy forums, playing an advocacy role in education, participating in international dialogues or producing reports on education (UNESCO Partnerships for Education or World Economic Forum Global Education Initiative among others). Programmes concerning higher education management and governance policies can also be considered as a kind of policy engagement. The most common forms of funding are grants and scholarships, but nowadays research-based funding couples with the creation of networks and partnerships between North and South universities or between two or more universities in the South. Beside research, international donors tend to fund information and technology purchasing and development.

A crucial point is the one of types of support. In this paper, we have adopted the analysis of Hydén's survey that identifies two angles of support: a *cultural and educational* and a *developmental*⁵¹ one. Cultural and educational support belongs to the relation between African countries and former colonies and focuses more on knowledge transmission, often financing individual scholarships, and most of time concentrating on South-to-North scholarships. This type of support helps the maintenance of some kind of ties with a given area and bases itself on a kept cultural influence on former colonies. Cultural and educational type of support favour students and postgraduate mobility in order to enlarge cultural proximity. The developmental approach is based on the

⁴⁹ G. HYDÉN, *Mapping the World of Higher Education and Research Funders: Actors, Models, Mechanisms and Programs*, Danish Development Research Network and Universities, Denmark, 2010, pp. 23-24.

⁵⁰ UNESCO, *Youth and skills: Putting education to work*, p. 3.

⁵¹ G. HYDÉN, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

global notion of development: when the latter changes, even the strategies are modified. Developmental support is most often research-based and targets the areas commonly associated with technology improvement and growth. Partnership and networks are established in order to find common solutions to global problems, multiplying the number of engaged stakeholders and with the aim of getting to exploitable outcomes. Depending on the type of support, the direct benefits are directed to individuals, teams or to institutions themselves. In many cases, donors benefits are also taken into account (especially in universities partnerships). Recent partnerships recognise the role of African scholars as intellectuals, but in some cases they are still seen as native informers (in this latter case results analysis and dissemination, as well as protocols' decisions, are still monopolised by North partners).

Encouraged by the World Bank observations, donors are experimenting the support to the creation of excellence centres. The shared idea is that the presence of centres of excellence, provided by all the necessary and updated means, can bust scientific research and getting to a faster reduction of technological gap. It would be an effective way of concentrating investments, instead of dispersing them aiming to an uncertain large-scale improvement. Few donors are focusing on reforming study curriculum and on closing the gap between university and market labour. This is probably due to the fact that both activities imply a multi-stakeholder approach and a close collaboration with governmental institutions in order to respond, first of all, to local needs.

Definition's criteria of donors' actions

Kinds of donors	Public	international organisations development banks organisations of bilateral cooperation	Funding models
	Private	companies billionaires foundations others	Short-middle term finding cycles Investors Trust Fund
Main channels	Financing through local no-profit organisation		Broaden or individual support
	Financing through international NGOs		
	Multilateral institutions		
Forms of support	In-kind contributions	<i>Libraries, laboratories, Infrastructures,</i>	Institutional capacity building/departements capacity development
	Direct services providers	<i>Internet access</i>	
	Policy engagement	<i>Partnerships/Networking/Lobby Governance/management reforms</i>	Individual or team support
	Funding	<i>Scholarships/ Information technology</i>	
Types of support	Cultural/educational	<i>Scholarships</i>	Individual
	Developmental	<i>Research based programmes</i>	Individual or team support
		<i>Partnerships/ Networking between universities North South o South South</i>	Institutional capacity building/departements capacity development

Source: from an elaboration of UNESCO, *Youth and skills: Putting education to work, Private Philanthropy & Social Investments in Support of Education for All* (2012) and H. GÖRAN, *Mapping the World of Higher Education and Research Funders: Actors, Models, Mechanisms and Programs* (2010).

3.2 Criticism and concerns on donors' action

In "Youth and skills: Putting education to work, Private Philanthropy & Social Investments in Support of Education for All", UNESCO expresses concern for certain emerging tendencies of international donors. Analyzing the activities of the principal foundations and corporations, the paper notices (1) *lack of transparency and accountability*, (2) *lack of coordination and cohesiveness*, (3) *short term contribution for long-term needs*, (4) *weak monitoring and evaluation procedures*, (5) *ambiguities in targets' choice*, (6) *arbitrary definition of 'shared value'*.

Private donors tend to give little information about their magnitude, scope and budget, and in some case even about their projects, reducing their public transparency and accountability. This lack of information and details makes difficult to map private donors and to evaluate the real amount of their support to higher education.

Lack of transparency and high competition invalidate international aid coordination: most of times private donors decide their action field and methods in a unilateral way, without the concern of assuring a complete coverage of higher education needs. The private donors' potential to enhance innovation, to advance policy reforms, to define strategic programs in collaboration with the national government is definitely reduced by the lack of coordination and results in actions overlapping, projects' duplication and marginalization of certain recipients categories and geographical areas. Lack of large-scale coordination leads to scarce cohesiveness: UNESCO claims that there's a *loose alignment with broader Education for All agenda*⁵². The relation between private donors and governments is not always clear: if some of them totally refuse to collaborate with public institutions as they haven't been able to solve their national problems, often worsening the situation, others built more contacts with government officers and leadership. In any case, the efforts to align donors' actions to the national education strategy are still very few, creating a confused environment in which policies are never shared and designed thinking in a long-term perspective.

Furthermore, private donors funding is often unpredictable: the duration of the projects depends essentially on donors' willingness, even to go on with the project, and means more than on precise previous assessments. Donors' actions often imply short terms contributions for long terms needs. The concern for sustainability is not taken in account, recreating the vicious circle of international aids dependence.

Many of the collateral effects of donors funding came from weak monitoring and evaluation procedures. As in many cases private donors aren't obliged to be accountable to anyone else but themselves, and they do not often appeal to external evaluation, their methodology is not always accurately revised and applied. Furthermore, the only persons called to evaluate the projects are the recipients, who cannot give their totally free opinion. *Reading through various documents about donor-sponsored activities in this*

⁵² UNESCO, *Youth and skills: Putting education to work*, p. 1.

field it is evident that the main findings rest on subjective data and interpretations. Who does not have a positive view after having received a scholarship or a research grant? Who can claim that a research project or training grant is a failure? Because the parameters of the many activities that are supported by donors vary and so does the context, it is impossible to identify a “best practice” that applies across the board.⁵³ Hydén reports how it's difficult to measure international projects results: if it's quite easy to consider the outputs, it's more complicated to find common criteria to outcomes' evaluations. For instance, tracing multiple causal links to estimate the indirect benefits of a grant or a scholarship is a risky procedure, as one must consider several indefinable elements (the authors of DKUNI survey talks about a *guesswork*⁵⁴).

Another UNESCO concern is target's choice. Private donors choice of recipients doesn't always depends on countries' income, or on how bad are universities' conditions, but it's often lead by other considerations. For instance, in the case of corporations, projects are generally located where is more necessary to improve the quality of business environment, where governments asks for social compensations in exchange for resources exploitation or in strategic places for market interests. However, universities that are more capable to lobby and networking (for example the University of Makerere in Uganda or the University of Dar El Salaam in Tanzania) tend to receive more funding than less structured institutions. In addition to that, international donors tend to fund major public universities, to the detriment of universities located in less central provinces.

Finally, the definition of *shared value* is a crucial element, preceding and founding programmes' efficacy.

3.3 Shared value and academic freedom

UNESCO warns about the unilateral definition of “shared value” as the maximization of private and social benefit supposedly achieved by donors' programs: *the worth of “shared value” is often only assessed by the donor – not the recipient – and ignores the degree to which power relationships of donor and recipient, ideology, and rhetoric associated with the private interests can create long-term systemic inequalities or interruptions to the provision of strong public education*⁵⁵. The ambiguity of the concept of “shared value” gets clearer when analysing the indirect effects of developmental approach in research funding. The focus of developmental approach is mainly on science, technology, engineering, financial literacy and entrepreneurship (even if the foundations don't disregard life skills development and social equality programs). In general, the programs are research-based and aim at obtaining some kind of exploitable and innovative result. If programs are directed to university management improvement, they mainly address economic issues as cost reduction and human resources reorganisation. Moreo-

⁵³ G. HYDÉN, op. cit., p. 28.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ UNESCO, op. cit., p. 5.

ver, as Hydén underlines, at departmental level programs tend to be driven by individual scholars and benefit *first and foremost* those directly involved in such projects⁵⁶. These programs give prestige and international visibility to universities. Beside their scientific relevance, international funded projects have a political weight, that often encompass their real urgency in terms of research progress. One of the main concerns expressed by Africa scholars, it's that international funding can threaten recipients' academic freedom.

Khelfaoui and Oanda Ogachi argue that as donors become the only sources of funding, *their exercise considerable influence, sometimes with the support of university administration, not only on the orientation and the choice of research fields, but also on research itself, often reduced to mere collections of information and therefore, beyond the academic freedom, on the very existence of science produced in Africa by Africans*⁵⁷. The authors concerns are also directed towards the researchers that see in the participation to international projects an opportunity to rise up their salaries: *many of the researchers commissioned by donors confine themselves to producing simple investigation reports, without increasing research efforts and taking the necessary time for thorough scientific analyses, thereby threatening the advancement of science from within the universities themselves. The dominant trend is to develop 'expertise' to the detriment of 'research'*⁵⁸. In both criticisms there's the shared idea that research programs sponsored by donors don't take in account the research otherwise produced by African scholars, as they just need presentable results, to be achieved (and showed) in a given time. Ogachi goes further stating that the concept of African universities as a semi-public service (with an associated cost, and a social and a personal return), together with the research constraints of donors' programmes and their political exploitation by the university administration, have *sabotaged the capacity of the academics to execute their social (and intellectual) responsibilities*⁵⁹. In other words, a collateral effect of donors-guided research can be the progressive desertion of African scholars from their social role and the consequent intellectual detachment from their own community.

In an interesting paper called: 'Pursuing Excellence in a 'World-Class African University': The Mamdani Affair and the Politics of Global Higher Education'⁶⁰, I.A. Komola quoted the Mamdani affair as an example of the inner contradiction that emerged when a university (in this case the University of Cape Town) willing to become a "world class" university or an international excellence hub, renounce to its responsibility in front of lo-

⁵⁶ G. HYDEN, op. cit., p. 18.

⁵⁷ H. KHELFAOUI, and I. OANDA OGACHI, *Academic Freedom in Africa: Between Local Powers and International Donors*, JHEA/RESA Vol. 9, Nos. 1 and 2, 2011, p. 8.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ I. OANDA OGACHI, *Neo-liberalism and the Subversion of Academic Freedom from Within: Money, Corporate Cultures and 'Captured' Intellectuals in African Public Universities*, in JHEA/RESA Vol. 9, Nos. 1 and 2, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2011, p. 31.

⁶⁰ I.A. KAMOLA *Pursuing Excellence in a 'World-Class African University': The Mamdani Affair and the Politics of Global Higher Education*, in JHEA/RESA Vol. 9, Nos. 1 and 2, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2011.

cal community. In September 1996, Mahmood Mamdani (one of the most influential professors in the African studies sector) was appointed to the A.C. Jordan Professorship of African Studies at the University of Cape Town. In 1998 he was asked to design and teach a new course on Africa's history that would serve as Foundation Seminar for students entering social sciences class. Mamdani called the course "Problematising Africa" and decided to focus on major debates within the field of African Studies (colonisation, neo-liberalism, nationalism etc.). Once he had designed the course, the chair of the Working Group overseeing the class released the results of a faculty poll, showing that most of Mamdani's colleagues considered the first four course areas of 'very little importance'. Some of the members of the Working Group argued that Mamdani had over-estimated the competences of the first year students. For this reason, Mamdani was asked to review the content proposed for his course. As he decided not to change the program, protesting against the limitation of his academic freedom, another professors' team was appointed to replace him in that seminar. Beside the aspects linked to South African post-apartheid debate, Komola highlights that one of the main points made by Mamdani opponents was that the kind of knowledge given by Mamdani's course wasn't interesting because it wouldn't develop the appropriated abilities of a world-class university. His critical teaching wasn't the priority for an expertise-deliver institution willing to find its place in the international knowledge market. In addition, Mamdani claimed that if the course was too difficult for the students, it meant that a deep reflection had to be started about what was the role of higher education in increasing the quality of secondary and primary education (as higher education is the place in which primary and secondary schools curriculum are created and where teachers are formed).

In his paper *Higher Education, the State and the Marketplace*, Mamdani goes further in warning on the risks that university takes if research is penalized in the name of the mere development of expertise: *in contrast to the World Bank's attempt to marginalize higher education as an elitist preoccupation, higher education is where teachers are trained, where curricula are developed, where the range of leadership of an independent country is cultivated, and where research is located. In sum, higher education is where we develop the range of choices which make democracy meaningful in different spheres of life*⁶¹.

For Mamdani, democracy becomes effective when higher education exercises its intellectual and political responsibility, enhancing students' awareness, and choosing local level as the primary field of intervention.

3.4 Best policies in higher education funding

Exploring international donors' actions and recent redefinition of their paradigms, it is possible to outline the following guidelines in order to improve the efficacy and pertinence of cooperation in higher education support.

⁶¹ M. MAMDANI, *Higher Education, the State and the Marketplace*, in JHEA/RESA Vol. 6, No. 1, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2008, p. 1.

- 1) *Projects in wider assessments.* The assessment should take into account the macro-economic and socio-political context of the targeted geographical area and of the single beneficiaries, making private donors particularly aware of the kind of economy and the structure of the society in which recipients are located. The aim is not only the one of understanding whether their programs benefit a low income area or a middle income country, but it concerns the possibilities offered by the socio-economic environment to create a virtuous circle (understanding market demand, identifying the perspective of development of certain sectors, forecasting eventual political instability, etc.). A wider assessment must take into account covered and uncovered needs, mapping active international programs in the same area, as well as NGOs actions and governmental policies in the field of higher education. All the stakeholders must be considered, from institutions to private sectors and civil society. Marginalized areas, both in term of political-geographical distance from the capital city or the economic centre of the country and/or the region and distribution of minority groups, must be seen as priority fields of intervention, as far as improvements in higher education quality lead to major integration. Before thinking about creating a world-class university, it's important to understand how to enhance the pivotal role of university at local, regional and national level. Concerning this point, it's also fundamental to assess the kind of role playing by university in its country development process, and how higher education is seen in the national poverty reduction strategy. Finally, it's important not to forget that universities are systems of powers, so it is decisive to understand the degree of independence or of governmental and political undue penetration. In any case, international donors must relate with all the components, from professors to administrative managers, students associations and institutional representatives in direction councils.
- 2) *Coordination and cohesiveness, without homologation.* The elaboration of a program that avoids duplication is the first step to reach better coordination with and within the others actors. Better coordination means the capacity of planning and establishing a mutual dialogue with the others donors, making partnerships if needed and referring to common goals. When UNESCO calls for coordination and cohesiveness, doesn't call for homologation. International donors' specificities assure the diversification of targets and cooperation methods, favoring aid adaptation to the context and responsiveness to local needs.
- 3) *Preferring flexible forms of funding and long term programs.* Especially for research based projects, it's crucial to guarantee a holistic and flexible form of funding, which should be easily managed from the recipients, without being tied to too strict terms of utilization. Trust funds creation should be accompanied by agreed monitoring procedures, which would enforce co-responsibility in terms of transparency and accountability. Scholars have underlined how research development needs everywhere long term programs.
- 4) *Favoring local community proximity to enlarge sustainability.* The key to the sustainability of higher education programs can be found in planning actions that tie,

and don't cut, the link between universities and local community. This can be said concerning projects that favor equality: programs that ease university access, foster girls participation, attendance, and leadership, or enhance mentorship for low income students to have a direct impact on students' families. Proximity can be addressed while targeting the academic disciplines to be supported: focusing on development, international donors have the exceptional power to strengthen research in the subjects that recipients themselves recognize as fundamental. The crucial point is how to enlarge programs' benefit from single researchers and departments to a variety of recipients, assuring quality but also a better sharing of results and achievements. In this sense, a mixed action, that provides postdoctoral or doctoral grants as well as laboratories equipments and students formation, can bring added-value to research findings. One of the ways to avoid the politicization of research projects achievements and partnerships is by differentiating actions, multiplying partners and recipients inside university. It is also important to try and reach less influent but valuable professors and department directors. Moreover, proximity to local community is achieved by strengthening the role of universities as spaces of critical thinking development, where humanities and socio-political studies shape future leadership knowledge on local, national and international context, in a comparative and innovative prospective. Donors need to consider how the university is rooted in society and forms citizens' identity. From this point of view, fellowships, grants and measures to address brain drain can be considered as ways to form intellectuals which are able to position themselves at the border between local and international dimension, without abandoning one of the two, but constantly mediating between different visions and perspectives with their own ambit as priority. Excellence is always a matter of exchanges.

- 5) *The more the proximity is favored, the more a project has chances to be sustainable.* African scholars criticize the superficial way in which certain African professors act when participating to international programs. Superficiality is due to various aspects: the idea that the funding are more important than projects themselves, time shortage, targeted subjects which are not always seen as research priorities and projects drafted according to what donors want to hear. Only a project concentrated on proximity and local demand and specifically tailored for recipients, can be perceived as authentically constructive, and meet the real motivation of scholars and students. Sustainability in higher education is also achieved by a precise understanding of the actors involved and by a continuous lobby and advocacy towards them. Assuring an aware involvement of private sector, institutions and partner universities need time, concrete proposals, and a higher level of engagement by international donors, beside a serious ex-post verification.
- 6) *Centrality of local research.* Local research is the expression of what are perceived as immediate needs by scholars and society. Taking into right consideration local research from the moment of project drafting is a way to understand and respect intellectual pathways, creating the base of cooperation. First of all in-

ternational aid must strengthen and empower what has been conceived at the local level. The same can be said for curricula updating and adjustments. Too often African universities go towards a general standardization replicating Western model, without integrating other aspects and techniques that could inspire new conceptions of university organization and renovated curricula.

- 7) *Deepening monitor and evaluation strategies.* For private donors monitoring and evaluation procedures have often the function of integrating program reports, useful for visibility and achievements dissemination. As a result, this type of M&E in most of cases aims at highlighting and emphasizing the positive aspects, especially concerning the improvements in everyday life brought by international projects. Furthermore, evaluating real benefits belonging to higher education is not an easy process: it's fundamental to establish appropriated parameters in terms of time periods and variables considered, knowing that, as it has been said for econometrics analysis, assessing social benefits is always a risky practice.
- 8) *M&E activities must cover all the program period, and possibly being effectuated by external evaluators.* Organizations, networks or associations of universities could help donors in understanding how actions are perceived by the recipients, and where projects should be improved. It's that the more recipients are addressed in a direct way, the more they tend to be grateful towards donors, especially if it's the only source of funding, reducing surveys' objectivity.
- 9) *Enhance recipients' participation, from the phase of program design.* Recipients' participation in programs and policies definition is crucial for internal coherence of projects and further sustainability. Active participation can be reached if donors are open and responsive to impulses and inputs coming from scholars, students and university leadership. Participation implies mutual trust and dialogue, not confined to projects formalities, but developed in specific fora and occasions, created to exchange and discusses projects' ethic and functioning.
- 10) *Giving assistance in application process and enlarging information dissemination* is a winning strategy in order to reach less networked universities and students.

4. Conclusions

Higher education cooperation and international donors' actions made valuable progress. From unilateral programs belonging to a rigid conception of developmental dynamics and scarce attention to recipients' willingness, international cooperation is going to move decisively to tailored programs, increasingly focused on local demand. Moreover, donors' actions have been progressively identifying new methods to strengthen collaboration and exchanges, as partnership creation and networking for information, advocacy and studies' dissemination. The methods of mutual learning and flexible and inclusive cooperation frameworks brought to broaden programs, addressing different kinds of needs from various levels, with the goal of real sustainability and a multisectoral approach. Creating the conditions for projects progression and coherence, international do-

nors, and especially bilateral ones, are making their action more and more constructive. The recent redefinition of donors' paradigms – towards programs differentiation, long-term actions and local needs focus – is showing that a general reflection on the issues of recipients' participation and project appropriation has been undertaken.

Nevertheless, the great potential of international donors' actions in tertiary education remains dispersed. Programs are concentrated in specific geographical areas, marginalizing universities with less developed networking mechanisms and low income countries. Certain countries undoubtedly receive over-attention, as designing projects for middle-income countries is certainly easier and success probabilities are higher. As visibility is a precious matter for donors, aspects like excellence or internationalization are privileged compared to actions focused on equality and access widening. The World Bank anathema on massification has generated the shared but biased view that broadening access automatically leads to overcrowded classrooms and low quality standards. On the contrary, the best model of university seems to be the one of a self-feeding microorganism, tied to labor market, performing virtuously in terms of costs and benefit relation, and producing globally expendable items.

The attention to sustainability is much more focused on economic gains, than on efficacy and motivation. Donors don't always address real urgencies, establishing priorities in a unilateral way. Moreover, in most of cases African scholars and scientists are still struggling to be considered more than recipients, affirming their intellectual accountability and highlighting the existence of local research, previous to international aids actions. There are still enormous lacks of valuable projects in the fields of social sciences and humanities, which seem to be regarded as a tool whose usage instructions went definitely lost, whereas they are essential pre-assumptions of any cohesive and inclusive approach to a sustainable development and democratization. Social changes don't seem to be a main goal: they come as secondary outputs of growth or they are the products of western donors' policies (as in the case of programs for girls' access or empowerment). The vision of social changes as complex inner processes, which cannot be directed externally step by step, is not taken into consideration.

International donors need to take the risk of distancing themselves to their deepest post-colonial certainties in order to explore new, and less comforting, solutions. As universities are, first and foremost, spaces of critical assessment and opinion-making, engaging African scholars in a fair intellectual dialogue could be a promising starting point for comparative analysis and overcoming of a mere donor-recipient paradigm. Even the possible reluctances of the local powers towards free research must be accustomed to the exigencies of progress. The outcomes of such mediation would benefit higher education even in 'developed' countries.

Annex - Major international donors and partnership for higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa

Who	How	Where
FOUNDATIONS		
Carnegie Corporation of New York - Excellence in postgraduate training, re-search and retention	Postgraduate training and retention, Libraries' creation and equipment	South Africa, Ghana, Uganda
Gates Foundation	Research funding on tropical diseases and global development issues (agri-culture among others), support to or-ganizations and institutions	Sub-Saharan Africa or scholars of the African diaspora
Global found for women	Granting for access to higher education	Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique
IIE - Institute of international education	Fellowships and scholarships, institu-tional capacity, assistance to threat-ened scholars and students	Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa, depending on the pro-grams
IFS - International Founda-tion for Science	Research grants to younger scholars, giving priority to women, capacity-building courses, grants for obtaining necessary procurement. Areas: Sus-tainable natural resources manage-ment, water and aquatic resources, food production, food security and nu-trition	Eligible for IFS support are those developing countries with a Gross National Income GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$) at, or below, the average for Middle Income Countries (MIC). G-20 Countries are not eligible (i.e. Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa).
Mastercard Foundation	Research and leadership in education; scholarship to study in American uni-versities; microfinance for youth; digital divide	Burkina, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia
PHEA - Partnership for Higher Education in Africa. A joint project of Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Ford Founda-tion, the J.D. and C.T. MacAr-thur Foundation, the Rockefel-ler Foundation, the W. and F. Hewlett Foundation, the A.W. Mellon Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation	Programmes in information and com-munication technologies, higher educa-tion research and analysis, regional networks for research and postgradu-ate training, and a university leaders' forum Closed in 2010 but single foundations are still working on the same pathway	Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar Mozambique, Nigeria, South Af-rica Tanzania, Uganda.
Trust Africa	Research on climate change, small grant for capacity building, harmoniza-tion of African languages	South Africa
Wellcome Trust of the UK	Fellowships and Investigator Award. Research-based programs in biomedical science, tropic medicine and public health	LMICS

BILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS

AFD - French development agency	Supports 2ie, a center of excellence for water engineering a Ouagadougou Initiative Ecole et langue nationale en Afrique (ELAN)	Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, RDC, Mali, Niger, Togo, Tanzania, Senegal
DAAD - German Academic Exchange Service	Long term scholarships. The single largest academic grant organization in the world (funds Humboldt foundation) It operates the (ex)/(ceed) program - Germany's Higher Education Excellence for Development Cooperation that support institutions that contribute in an innovative manner to the realization of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)	Different countries in all Sub Saharan Africa (ex)/(ceed) program in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania
DANIDA - Danish International Development Agency	Supports the program "Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries": a partnership between Danish and African Universities covering four thematic platforms: Environment and Climate, Growth and Employment, Human Health, Stability, Democracy and Rights	Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda
DELPHÉ - Development Partnership in Higher Education program	Managed jointly since its inception in 2006 by the British Council and the Association of Commonwealth Universities. Supports partnerships and multi-institutional projects. Projects range from agriculture, environment, health, to information technology, and include staff and student training, course redesign and communication workshops	DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
DFID - Department for international development UK	Commonwealth Scholarship Commission	Commonwealth countries
DGCD - General Direction for Cooperation and Development, Belgium CUD - University Commission for Development	Grants, partnerships programs, institutional cooperation, research for development	Benin, Burundi, DRC, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania
DGCS - General Direction Cooperation and Development, Italian MFA	Support to universities capacity building Supports the University Coordination for Cooperation & Development – CUCS (partnerships with African Universities)	Angola, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, Uganda

IDRC - International Development Research Center	Partnerships between Canadian and international organizations, or between organizations in the South. IDRC focuses on agriculture and the environment; science, technology and innovation; social and economic policy; and health and health systems. IDRC is one of very few donors that have explicit emphasized the importance of dissemination of research information through networks	Depending on projects
NUFFIC - Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education and Research	Its main scholarship program is the Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP). It offers fellowships for PhD and master's studies as well as short courses. It is demand-driven in the sense that organizations in the South apply for the fellowships on a competitive basis. Awards are made on two conditions: that half of available fellowships is awarded to female candidates and half of the budget is spent on candidates from Sub-Saharan Africa	Depending on programmes For higher education capacity building programme: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, South Soudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia
NUFU - The Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education	Programme for doctorates and master-level graduates. A programme for women researchers	Tanzania, Sudan and South Africa have special sub-programs. Other countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
SAREC - SIDA's department for research and cooperation, Sweden	Support research organizations, universities and research institutes in partner countries as well as regional research networks and international research programmes. Areas: natural sciences and technology, social science and humanities, health care, natural resources management and international agricultural research. The department also contributes towards capacity building	Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa Tanzania and Uganda among others
USAID - Higher Education for Development	Partnerships on global development issues, teachers training programs, distant learning, ICT	Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Namibia
CIDA - Canadian International Development Agency	Research based program in global development issues	Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania

MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT BANK		
African Development Bank (BAD/AFDB)	<p>African development bank; HEST project; African Virtual University project: support to national and regional centers of Excellence; funding for infrastructure for higher education, science and technology; linking higher education, science and technology with the productive sector</p> <p>Support to the network of African institutions for science and technology of CEDEAO and to the higher education capacity building project of UEMOA</p>	Different countries depending on the projects
African Union	Creation of Pan African University (PAU); Education management Information System (EMIS)	All countries
AUF - Agence universitaire de la francophonie	Research based programmes in development issues, teaching of French language, human rights and democracy, institutional capacity building	AUF members
European Commission	<p>Scholarships for graduate and post-graduates, twinning programs: Erasmus Mundus II; Mwalimu Julius Nyerere programme;</p> <p>EDULINK programme and Africaconnect: high capacity internet network in Sub-Saharan Africa connected to GEANT program (pan European data network dedicated to research and education)</p>	ACP countries
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	<p>Quality assurance, teachers training through the UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), institutional capacity building, partnership creation, comparative studies on higher education, creation of innovation centres and regional centres for research, women access to higher education</p> <p>UNESCO/Japan Young Researchers' Fellowships Programme</p>	All countries

World Bank	Assistance in planning higher education policies and their integration in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Institutional capacity building. Support to analytical work The Robert S. McNamara Fellowship for young researchers	All countries Post Secondary Education Project in Mauritania, Mozambique; Higher education project in Ethiopia, Millennium Science Initiative in Uganda
UEMOA - Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine	Programs for quality assurance, universities' accreditation and capacity building.	UEOMA countries
SADC – Southern Africa Development Community	Programs for quality assurance, universities' accreditation and capacity building.	SADC countries.
PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS		
AAU - Association of African Universities.	Experience exchange, leadership development, dissemination	To members institutions
ACU - Association of Commonwealth Universities	Research in higher education policies, mobility between commonwealth countries and dissemination activities	Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra-Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
ADEA - Association for the Development of Education in Africa	Information and research dissemination, exchange and mobility at the institutional level	The partners are the African ministries for Education
AERC - African economy research consortium	Fellowships and research programs (collaborative and comparative)	All countries
ANSTI - African Network of Scientific and Technical Institutions	Fellowships and grants for post-graduate students, conferences grants; a program for Diaspora scholars. Founded by UNESCO	Angola, Benin, Burkina, Burundi, Botswana, Cameroon, Congo, Ethiopia, RDC, Gabon, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Namibia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Senegal, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe
CAMES - Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'enseignement supérieur	Institutional coordination	Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, RCA, Congo, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, DRC, Rwanda, Tchad, Senegal, Togo
CODESRIA - The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa	Research dissemination, conferences and information exchange, scholarships	All countries

CRUFAOCI - Conférence des recteurs des universités francophones d'Afrique et d'Océan Indien	Creation of excellence centres, universities cooperation and information dissemination	Universities with membership
CSC - Commonwealth Scholarships Commission	Scholarship and fellowships in UK	Commonwealth countries
IUCEA - Inter-University Council for East Africa	Quality assurance, ICT, universities capacity building	Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda
OSSREA - Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa	Comparative research in gender issues, unemployment, migration	Liaison offices in Angola, Botswana, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia Zimbabwe
SACMEQ - Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality	Quality assurance, universities' accreditation	Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe
WARIMA - West African Research and Innovation Management Association	Quality assurance, universities' coordination	Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa

Source: organisations' websites and S. MORIN, *L'enseignement supérieur et la recherche en Afrique subsaharienne: Survol des organisations qui fournissent un appui technique et financier*, IDRC/CRDI, 2009.

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