

CONCEPT NOTE

WORKSHOP ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRETORIA

30/31 May and 1 June 2016

BACKGROUND

The number of students in higher education around the world expanded rapidly in the early years of the new millennium. In Africa, enrollments doubled between 2000 and 2013 (Unesco Institute for Statistics). In South and West Asia, a similar pattern occurred. Higher education growth in Latin America was lower, at around 40%, but is projected to grow rapidly through 2030. Student mobility has also been on the upswing. The average annual growth rate in international student mobility between 2000 and 2012 was 7%, comparing to average annual growth rates of about 2% before 2000. The enrollment growth in Africa and Asia comes at a time of consistent high economic growth in these regions. But the relationship between higher education and economic growth is complex. Investments in higher education can promote social mobility and decrease inequality, yet this is not an automatic outcome. Indeed in some countries, higher education has led to an increase in inequality. Similarly, increases in skills and knowledge can lead to job growth and higher salaries, but this too is not an automatic outcome.

This is why a workshop on higher education is so important. Most donors and partner countries recognize the potential contribution higher education can make to development, creating jobs, increasing social and economic mobility, contributing to a stronger civil society and better governance, and building a strong human capital base – training professionals such as teachers, doctors and engineers. But there is not enough understanding of how this works—what the mechanisms are that transform skills into growth, what needs to be in place for higher education to lead to greater equality, how the governance of higher education institutions is itself important for creating more open and innovative societies.

Lin, for instance, found that a 1 per cent increase in the number of graduates of institutions of higher education in Taiwan led to a 0.35 per cent increase in the

country's industrial output¹. But Kruss et al² argue that context matters when it comes to higher education—who has access, what the country's stage of development is, what the economies of surrounding countries offer in terms of a market, etc.

The design and content of this workshop are based on needs specifically identified by the Delegations, who expressed a strong preference for a focus on conceptual learning about higher education rather than a project-based approach. Hence, the workshop will address the role of higher education in development, and will support the active participation of Delegations in policy dialogue around core issues in the sector: not only the question of why we should invest in higher education, in innovation and research, but also how we should invest. The seminar will take a systems approach in considering the basic building blocks of a well-functioning high education sector: governance, staffing and quality assurance. It will address questions of relevance and accountability—what is the responsibility of institutions of higher education to governments, to the private sector, to the education sector? What difference does it make in all of these areas if the most disadvantaged populations are included or excluded? These questions to be discussed in the workshop will show us how the impact of higher education can be transformative for a society, and how best to avoid the risk that these potential impacts will not be realized.

The role of the EU. The EU supports higher education in partner countries mainly through scholarships and cooperation projects funded by the Erasmus+ programme³, which brings a number of earlier programmes such as Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Edulink and ALFA under one roof. Special attention is now being given to projects addressing the integration in higher education of refugees from conflict-affected

¹ Lin, T. (2004). The role of higher education in economic development: An empirical study of the Taiwan case, *Journal of Asian Economics* 15(2), 2004, p. 355–371.

² Kruss, G. et al (2015). Higher education and economic development: The importance of building technological capabilities. *International Journal of Educational Development*, Volume 43, July 2015, Pages 22-31.

³ Over the seven years of the programme (2014-2020), more than 200,000 students and staff worldwide will benefit from Erasmus+ scholarships provided by mobility partnerships with partner-country universities and by Erasmus Mundus joint masters programmes. More than two-thirds of these individuals will be from partner countries. By 2020, Erasmus+ will also have funded more than 1,000 collaborative projects involving European HE institutions and those from other parts of the world. These projects improve HE teaching and management, and help pave the way towards higher education policy reform.

countries. A large share of Erasmus+ higher education cooperation with partner countries is funded by development cooperation instruments (EUR 1.45bn comes from the DCI, ENI and EDF). The Pan-African Programme will provide approximately 40 million euros between 2014 and 2017 for initiatives such as the Pan-African University and Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme (South-South mobility), the Harmonization of Higher Education Programme and the Pan-African Masters Consortium in Interpretation and Translation (PAMCIT). There are also on-going initiatives in Asia, such as the EU SHARE programme and the European Higher Education fairs in Central Asia and Asia. Higher education is also a targeted component in several bilateral programmes in Africa, including programmes in Angola, Mauritius and South Africa.

RATIONALE FOR THE WORKSHOP ON HIGHER EDUCATION

The EU provides bilateral support to partner countries which have chosen higher education as a focal sector for the 2014-2020 programming period. In 2015, the EUD in Angola and Mauritius requested thematic support from Headquarters (HQ) for the higher education components in their new bilateral programming. The support requested from these delegations was similar, leading to the idea of organizing a joint workshop. South Africa subsequently expressed its own interest in participating in the workshop. This effort to gain a better understanding of the global challenges around higher education, and how it supports economic and social development is a reflection of the interest expressed by many EUDs in building knowledge and skills and creating a community of practice on higher education.⁴ All countries are now eligible to benefit from the new Erasmus+ regional program; the workshop will be of particular value for the ACP countries, as they are now benefitting from the international dimension of the new Erasmus+ for the first time.

This concept note describes the proposed workshop. It is the result of a consultation between DEVCO B4 (Education, Health, Research, Culture), DEVCO D1 (Development Coordination Southern Africa & Indian Ocean), DEVCO C7 (Thematic Programs Intra ACP), DEVCO O2 (Communication and Transparency), DEVCO O6 (DEVCO O6 - Quality and Results), EACEA, EU Delegations (EUDs) in South Africa (SA), in Angola and in

⁴ Jordan, Egypt and Morocco have also expressed their interest in participating; other countries that may be interested in this approach include Namibia, Mozambique, Pakistan, Swaziland, Liberia, Tanzania and Uganda.

Mauritius. The main meeting about a workshop on HE was held during the thematic seminar on education organized in Brussels in October 2015.

It is proposed to organize the workshop from May 30 through June 1 in the EUD in Pretoria in South Africa. Pretoria was selected for several reasons: South Africa has chosen higher education as a focal sector; it has academic institutions and EU partners whose expertise in HE would enrich the workshop; and it has the appropriate infrastructure—several hotels in Pretoria could provide a suitable venue, with good flight connections. The seminar could also serve as a "pilot" workshop on higher education to be eventually expanded to other regions. The focus of the discussions will be driven by content and substance rather than instruments and inward-looking experience. This is a thinking and learning exercise which could lead to positive change in the way seminars and workshops are run. Some of the sessions could be filmed for sharing knowledge on higher education.

PURPOSE

To provide thematic support on higher education issues to EUDs, enabling more effective participation in policy dialogue on higher education.

OBJECTIVES

Workshop objectives are as follows:

1. Provide thematic support on HE to EUDs.
2. Increase skills, knowledge and understanding of HE for participants, including the mechanisms through which investments in higher education and training improve skills and employability, and how better governance of institutions of higher education can promote inclusiveness, innovation and research.
3. Contribute to the ongoing dialogue around the role of HE in supporting implementation of SDG4.
4. Build a community of good practices on HE and communicate what the EU is doing in HE, including C4DEV activities.
5. Reinforce the EU dialogue and partnerships with academics, EU MS, donors and other partners on HE.

6. Develop a template for follow-up thematic workshops on HE issues and opportunities.

PRINCIPLES OF EU ENGAGEMENT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

The EU recognizes the important role higher education plays for development. EU higher education programmes are developed in close co-operation with relevant regional organisations, such as the African Union Commission and the ACP Secretariat. The African Union Commission has declared the revitalisation of higher education and its quality enhancement to be one of its priority areas for the future development and the regional integration of Africa. Similarly, ASEAN, The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has declared higher education of vital importance to its end goal of economic integration within the region.

The workshop's attention to the role of HE in improving teacher training is consistent with the EU Development Policy Agenda for Change (2011), which underlines the need to improve EU support for quality education. It is also in line with the SDG4 agreed in September 2015 aiming to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING

The workshop will be supported by the C4DEV team during the seminar for editorial work and to enhance sharing knowledge.

COMMUNICATIONS/VISIBILITY

The workshop on higher education provides an opportunity to increase visibility through organization of a series of parallel activities, including interviews with the speakers and participants from the EUDs, reporting on projects in South Africa supported by the EU, and promotion of regional programs as the beneficiaries of Erasmus +. The workshop also coincides with the EU's launch of the first call for proposals for the intra-Africa programme with a budget of € 10 million. It thus provides the potential for DEVCO/EAC/EACEA to promote the new programme and to present its features to the colleagues in the Delegations. EACEA could also use the opportunity to visit some of the on-going intra-ACP projects in South Africa and be available to contribute to presenting the international dimension of Erasmus+ in coordination with colleagues from DG EAC.

A Kapuscinski Development Lecture will be held during the seminar, on May 31 (date to be confirmed). The University of Pretoria, will host the event. The speaker(s) is (are) to be confirmed. . The proposal of speakers for the KDL will be validated by EAC, DEVCO B4 and the EU Delegation in South Africa. Preparations for the lecture will be finalized by the DEVCO communication team in close cooperation with UNDP.

THE ORGANIZERS

DEVCO B4 will coordinate the seminar in close cooperation with EUDs in SA, Mauritius and Angola. Other partners such as EAC, EACEA, DG employment, DG Research, DEVCO 04 will contribute to specific sessions on the agenda or to communications activities. A local event coordinator will be engaged to organise the logistics on the ground.

A task force for the organization of the workshop will be put in place. Regular coordination meetings (by video conference) for the organizers will be organized from March 2016 through May 2016. These will comprise DEVCO B4 and the EUDs in Angola, Mauritius and South Africa, DEVCO 02, DEVCO06 and DEVCO D1. A timeline will be communicated to the participants.

THE PARTICIPANTS

The target audience is the EUDs in partner countries; it is expected that around 40 people representing 15-20 EUDs would participate in this workshop. DEVCO and NEAR regional colleagues have been asked to identify additional EUDs that would be interested in participation. Representatives coming from EAC, EACEA, academic partners in South Africa, international organizations/partners/academic institutions with expertise in higher education. EU Members states and partners working on HE and teacher training, could join the seminar for specific interventions.