



The Sixth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference,

Date: 22nd October, 2018.

Higher Agricultural Education and Agricultural Technical (HAE) & Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Community of Practice

Background

Side Event Summary

Recently, there has been a growing interest within the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and elsewhere in fostering collaboration between higher agricultural education (HAE) institutions and agricultural technical and vocational education and training (ATVET) institutions. Partnerships between these two levels of agriculture workforce development are of great importance to HAE institutions, TVET institutions, employers, and private and public investors. A deliberate effort to promote these partnerships should be made. In order to promote sustainable HAE-ATVET partnerships more effectively, there is need to learn from the experiences of those that have implemented these partnerships. It will be helpful, therefore, to create an HAE-ATVET Community of Practice (CoP), as a platform for the sharing of lessons gleaned from HAE-ATVET partnership experiences.

Background

Local and cross-border partnerships among institutions of higher learning have been in existence for many years. The purposes of inter-university partnerships vary. As Chapman and Pekol (2012) pointed out, some universities enter into partnerships in order “to increase revenue, enhance instructional quality, expand curricular offerings, raise institutional prestige, obtain skill sets not available on their own campus...”¹ Nearly all donors have used North-South partnerships in higher education as a cost-effective and sustainable strategy for building the capacities of universities in developing countries to enable them play an effective role in the development of human capital. For instance, the

¹ Chapman, D.& Pekol, A. (2012). Cross-border collaboration in higher education: Learning to work together.” Retrieved from http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/apeid/Conference/16thConference/papers/D._Chapman_and_A._Pekol_-_cross_border_collaboration_10-16-12.pdf

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United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) committed £15 million in 2006 towards higher education partnerships in a number of countries, including Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nigeria, Malawi, Kenya, Lesotho, and Democratic Republic of Congo.²

Whereas higher education partnerships have been in existence for many years, what has been a rare occurrence in Africa is the incidence of partnerships between higher agricultural education (HAE) institutions and agricultural technical and vocational education and training (ATVET) institutions, despite both types of institutions sharing the same agricultural workforce development objective. Although some universities started off as ATVET centres, tradition has tended to separate the goals of universities from those of ATVET institutes. Traditionally, universities were not considered ideal for the development of practical skills and ATVET institutions were not considered suitable for research. Recently, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) has expressed interest in fostering collaboration between higher agricultural education (HAE) institutions and ATVET institutions. RUFORUM commissioned a study to collect lessons from the experiences of Egerton University in Kenya and Gulu University in Uganda that have developed partnerships with ATVET institutions and other stakeholders.

The topic of HAE-ATVET partnerships is of great interest not only to RUFORUM but also to many institutions of learning and development agencies engaged in strengthening capacities of educational institutions. Such partnerships are important because they provide opportunities for both types of institutions to leverage on each other’s strengths and complement their weaknesses. For instance, HAE focuses its training more on practical vs theoretical (40:60) and strengthening vocations. Furthermore, ATVET lacks is the research element and the link on how to apply it practically. Conversely, HAE programs focus more on theoretical knowledge and weak on applied practical skills. Collaboration between HAE and ATVET has many benefits. However, the full nature of the benefits, the implementation challenges, and the strategies for overcoming the challenges have not yet been fully explored. In order to

² USAID (2014). African higher education: Opportunities for transformative change for sustainable development. Retrieved from <http://www.aplu.org/library/african-higher-education-opportunities-for-transformative-change-for-sustainable-development/file>

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promote sustainable HAE-ATVET partnerships more effectively, there is need to learn from the experiences of those that have implemented these partnerships. It will be helpful, therefore, to create an HAE-ATVET Community of Practice (CoP), as a platform for the sharing of lessons gleaned from HAE-ATVET partnership experience. Communities of practice can be defined as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” Wenger, 2011.³

Purpose of the Side Event

To propose strategies for sharing knowledge and promoting learning from experiences relating to starting and sustaining HAE-ATVET partnerships in order to create opportunities for both types of institutions to leverage on each other’s strengths and complement their weaknesses

Objectives of the side Event

The objectives of the event are:

- To discuss the concept of an HAE-ATVET Community of Practice;
- To select a core-group of institutions engaged in HAE-TVET partnerships that will meet to draft the HAE-TVET Community of Practice charter which, among other things, will define the vision, mission, norms, roles, modes of communication, schedule of meetings, and activities of the CoP. Based on the guidelines proposed by Cambridge and Suter (2005)⁴, the core group will be guided by the following design stage questions:

Activities: What kinds of activities will the CoP promote?

³ Wenger, E. (2011). Communities of Practice: A Brief Introduction. Retrieved from <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/11736>

⁴ Cambridge, D. & Suter, V. (2005). Community of practice design guide: A step-by-step guide for designing & cultivating communities of practice in higher education. Retrieved from <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2005/1/community-of-practice-design-guide-a-stepbystep-guide-for-designing-cultivating-communities-of-practice-in-higher-education> page 5

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Communication: What mode of communication will the CoP adopt (what is cost effective and also allows maximum exchange and interaction bearing in mind most TVET institutions are based in remote rural locations with limited internet connectivity)?

Interaction: What kinds of interactions will characterize the CoP

Learning: How will learning be facilitated?

Knowledge Sharing: How will knowledge be shared within the CoP and with the general public?

Collaboration: How will collaboration among members be done?

Roles and Social Structures: What roles and structures will be necessary for the operations and sustainability of the CoP?

- To propose to RUFORUM a resolution for the creation of an HAE-ATVET Community of Practice

**Approach
Methodology**

and The event will take the following approach:

- Introductions of participants
- A PowerPoint presentation describing the concept and the event objectives
- Small Group Discussion of the concept, reactions to the presentation
- Selection of core-group
- Summary of event resolutions

**Venue
Participants**

and Members of the HAE-ATVET Community of Practice will include RUFORUM member institutions engaged in or interested in forming partnerships with ATVET institutions, ATVET institutions engaged in or interested in forming partnerships with HAE institutions, development agencies supporting tertiary education, public and private sector entities supporting tertiary education, non-governmental organizations with an interest in tertiary education, and any organizations or individuals with an interest in HAE-ATVET partnerships.

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Expected Outputs

The formation of the HAE-ATVET Community of Practice will have the following outcomes:

- Agriculture workforce knowledge and skills generated
- Synergy between HAE and TVET development activities enhanced
- Learning curve of new HAE-TVET partnerships reduced
- HAE-TVET articulations developed to facilitate mobility across the two levels of agriculture workforce development
- Sharing of resources among HAE and TVET institutions encouraged
- Innovations in agriculture workforce development fostered
- HAE-TVET agenda institutionalized in RUFORUM programs

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