

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

9 APRIL 2007

Vol 2 No. 15

ISSN 0795-3089



The Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission, Professor Julius A. Okojie welcoming Madam Minister of Education, Mrs. Obiageli Ezekwesili, CFR and the Minister FCT, Malam Nasir El-Rufa'i to the venue of the FGN/ASUU negotiation. The two Ministers were in NUC to monitor the progress of the negotiations

UNESCO Portal on Recognized Higher Education Institutions (Pilot Project)

Overview of the Portal

While drafting the UNESCO/OECD *Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education*, experts identified the need for an International Portal on Recognized Higher Education Institutions. This portal will aim to increase the transparency of quality provision in cross-border higher education. The purpose of the portal will be to improve access to up-to-date, accurate, and comprehensive information on recognized higher education institutions/providers at the international level.

The UNESCO Portal will function as a global entrance point, which allows users to access information from the official national websites of participating countries. The Portal will provide access to basic information in the following key areas:

- National higher education systems;
- Quality assurance and accreditation systems and associated bodies (at the global, regional, and national levels);
- Higher education institutions/providers and, where possible, the programmes that they offer (particularly providing information on how and with whom they have been accredited).

The Portal will function by establishing relationships with national partners who have a mandated responsibility for gathering and maintaining this data within their own countries. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the system, these national partners will take full responsibility for managing the information at national levels, ensuring that it is accurate, up-to-date, and comprehensive.

The design of the Portal will be finalized during a first-phase pilot project. During this time, a template specification – a document outlining what information is required from national partners for the Portal – will be developed. National partners will have the freedom to use whatever systems they choose to manage information on their country's higher education systems and institutions. Where required, UNESCO or countries participation in the Pilot project will provide these partners support in being able to set up their systems in such a way that they are capable of providing this information to the central Portal.

Structure of the Portal

The Portal will be designed to function primarily as an entry point, allowing users to access authorized national information with a minimum of effort. The International Portal Site at UNESCO would give brief introduction in the six UN languages and provide links to national websites.

The UNESCO Portal will permit countries to include institutions that are defined by the competent national authority as belonging to HE and recognized as such, whatever the recognition may entail in that specific country. It is up to each country to decide whether or not to provide information in languages other than the national language(s). There is no international agreement on terminology, thus each national website should provide an explanation on how terms related to the QA of HE (recognition, accreditation, quality assurance, etc) are used in the national context.

Participating Countries

The pilot project involves Argentina; Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, Egypt, India, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America.

The Steering Group

To drive the pilot project, a steering group was constituted made up of one representative of each participating country and observers from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); International Association of Universities (IAU); International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE); and European Network of Information Centres (ENIC)- National Academic Recognition Information

Centres (NARIC). The Secretariat for the steering group is provided by UNESCO - The Division of Higher Education, Paris.

The steering group is mandated to among other things, decide on the general structure and level of ambition of the pilot project and monitor the implementation of the project at national level.

Members of the group are charged with responsibility for anchoring the project (by promotion and networking), monitoring the adaptation of the national portal/website and identifying needs, obstacles and solutions.

The steering group held its second meeting at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris on March 19 – 20, 2007 mainly to identify the needs and areas of assistance of category “A” countries such as Nigeria-(Category “A” countries are countries requiring support to actualize the project).

Nigeria (National Universities Commission) is represented in the steering group of the UNESCO Portal on Recognized Higher Education Institutions by Dr. Suleiman Ramon-Yusuf, Deputy Director, Quality Assurance.

Madam Minister Charges Tertiary Institutions to Evolve Strategies to Control the Spread of HIV and AIDS

Madam Minister of Education, Mrs. O. Ezekwesili CFR declared open a two day consultative meeting organized by the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education on 26th - 27th March 2007. The objective of the meeting was to appraise the state of national response to HIV&AIDS epidemic in the tertiary institutions.

A total of 120 participants, representing various tertiary educational institutions attended the meeting. The National Universities Commission (NUC) made a presentation on the integration of HIV and AIDS course modules as part of the general studies curriculum in all Nigerian universities.

The general assessment of the state of response of stakeholders to the HIV and AIDS disease in the tertiary education sector has been adjudged to be below average. This is against the backdrop that although the prevalence rate of HIV in Nigeria is about 4.4%, its prevalence among the youth population far outstrips this figure in some cities. Madam Minister stated that these challenges require *imaginative and creative solutions which may require the regulatory agencies and NACA to think outside the box*. An overview of the situation in Nigerian higher educational institutions shows that:

- Only the university sub sector has developed and implemented a systematic programme on the fight against HIV and AIDS through the development of HIV and AIDS curriculum for inclusion as a compulsory General Studies course in Nigerian universities, organisation of sensitization campaigns and establishment of Youth Friendly Centres (YFC) in six universities with support from NACA and ECO Bank;
- The YFC established have been functioning sub optimally owing to lack of clear directives on the structure of management and sustainability plan;

- Most tertiary educational institutions have not yet evolved their own HIV and AIDS policies, drawing inspiration from the National Policy on HIV and AIDS for the Education Sector in Nigeria and the Policy Framework for HIV and AIDS for Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria to guide programming at the institutional level.

Participants unanimously called on the regulatory agencies to put in place mechanisms to encourage all institutions under their purview to accomplish the following:

- i. Domesticate the national policy on HIV and AIDS for the education sector in their various institutions;
- ii. Establish HIV and AIDS Committees in their institutions. The Committees are to be headed by the Chief Executives of the institutions;
- iii. Conduct baseline surveys to determine the rate of prevalence in the institutions, noting particularly the provision on confidentiality in the HIV and AIDS policy;
- iv. Commence capacity building programmes on HIV and AIDS with support from NACA and the regulatory agencies;

COMMUNIQUÉ

Preamble:

The National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) convened a two day Stakeholders meeting on HIV & AIDS Initiative for Tertiary Institutions on March 26-27, 2007 at Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

Participants at the meeting included heads and HIV & AIDS programme officers of Tertiary Institutions, representatives of National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Development Partners, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

Opening Ceremony:

Professor Babatunde Osotimehin, DG of NACA, in his welcome address provided the background of the meeting and emphasized the need for a comprehensive and holistic HIV programming at the tertiary institutions level where most vulnerable groups of youth aged 15-29 form majority of the community population. Goodwill messages were delivered by the representatives of the United Nation System, USAID, DG NYSC and NANS, who all lauded the initiative and pledged their support.

In her keynote address, Madam Minister of Education, Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili commended the Federal Government and NACA for all the efforts that have led to the reduction of the HIV prevalence to 4.4%. She acknowledged the central role education plays in improving knowledge and promoting positive behaviour. She pledged her total commitment to accelerate the Education sector response through action on immediate next steps including directing the convening of a meeting of all heads of tertiary institutions to discuss HIV & AIDS programming and urging NACA to buy into current reforms in institutions such as Students Career Counseling Centres, Empowerment Education and others

Technical Session:

Various Resource Persons facilitated presentations in the plenary session, followed by exhaustive deliberations. The following Challenges in HIV & AIDS programming at tertiary level were identified:

- A. Most tertiary institutions do not have comprehensive HIV & AIDS program.

- B. Most HIV & AIDS programmes in tertiary institutes are limited to awareness programmes only.
- C. The existing Youth Friendly Centers though inadequate in number, have not been well managed and utilized.
- D. Existing HIV & AIDS policies and programs are not well known to authorities of most tertiary institutions.
- E. There is a lack of baseline data and research on HIV & AIDS in tertiary institutions.
- F. There has not been funding allocated to tertiary Institutions for HIV & AIDS programming
- G. No Provision made for people living with HIV and affected by HIV & AIDS within our tertiary institutions
- H. There is a dearth of documentation on current HIV & AIDS programming in tertiary institutions
- I Also, the lack of monitoring and evaluation strategies to track the progress of the programme was noted as well as the dearth of holistic care treatment and support

Following the above challenges, some recommendations were made:

1. That an HIV & AIDS policy be developed for every institution.
2. A baseline research be carried out on all campuses to generate a comprehensive baseline data on HIV & AIDS in our tertiary institutions
3. The programme implementers in the institutions should be trained early in advocacy, Monitoring & Evaluation, Report writing, Financial Management, as well as counseling, HIV issues and sex education among others.
4. More Youth Friendly Centers should be established in other tertiary institutions so as to make the desired impact.
5. Institutions should ensure proper governance, coordination and sustainability of HIV & AIDS programmes established on campus
6. Heads of tertiary institutions should ensure cordial students-Management relationships to create an enabling environment for effective HIV & AIDS program implementation
7. Tertiary institutions should be guided by the National Policy Framework to fashion out policies for protecting HIV-positive Staff and students and people affected by AIDS (PABA).
8. Tertiary institutions should establish HIV Research Centers and integrate HIV & AIDS issues into General Studies courses and other relevant courses at undergraduate and Post Graduate levels including as research projects.
9. Tertiary institutions should be incorporated into the operation of the proposed HIV&AIDS Education forum.
10. A learning forum to be created on HIV &AIDS programming in tertiary institutions.
11. A Technical Working Group to facilitate the HIV & AIDS initiative for tertiary institutions was constituted comprising representatives of NACA, FME, NUC, NBTE, NCCE, NBTE, FUTO, COE, Kano, Federal Polytechnic, Idah, NANS, ECO Bank, MTN, Action Health International, NYNETHA and UNFPA

Conclusion:

The stakeholders commended the Federal Government, NACA and the Federal Ministry of Education and the Development Partners for the initiative and believed that the awareness created at this meeting will help tertiary institutions to assume their proper role in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Converting Innovation to Impact

The 10th MIT \$100K Global Startup Workshop (GSW) with the theme “*Converting Innovation to Impact*” was held in Trondheim, Norway from 26th – 28th March, 2007. GSW is the world’s premier conference on fostering entrepreneurship through supportive and catalytic infrastructure such as that epitomized by MIT’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. Each year, about 30 MIT students organize the 3 day conference in close collaboration with partners from a different country in order to discuss practical steps that can be taken by students, academic faculty, venture capitalists, government leaders, entrepreneurs and top business leaders. The workshop therefore provides an unrivalled opportunity to share best practices for fostering and supporting entrepreneurs within and between different regions and for contributing to the global network on entrepreneurial support organizations.

The first GSW was held in 1998. Prior to the first outing, the MIT Entrepreneurship Competition organizers received weekly calls from people around the world interested in learning how to start a business plan competition and sharing best practices to improve existing competitions. These calls came from students, entrepreneurs, business leaders and government officials committed to help launch successful new ventures that would fuel local economies. These conversations revealed the need for a forum to share experiences in organizing business plan competitions, and as a result, the first MIT \$100K Global Startup Workshop was launched in March 1998 in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

This year’s workshop drew about 335 participants from 33 countries. Nigeria was ably represented at the workshop with the participation of the National Universities Commission (through Dr. N.B. Saliu, Mrs. L.N. Achor and Mrs. Rita Okechukwu), University of Ilorin, Federal Capital Territory Administration/Science and Technology Unit, National Biotechnology Development Agency and National Board of Technology Incubation.

On the first day of the workshop with the sub-theme “*Creating the Urgency to Convert Innovation to Impact*” Mr. Kenneth P. Morse a serial entrepreneur and Managing Director, MIT Entrepreneurship Center delivered a keynote paper on *Critical Success Factors in Entrepreneurship – What’s Hot*. Two panel discussions were held on *The Role of University in Converting Innovation to Impact* and *An Introduction to the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem*. The Breakout session for the day focused on *The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem*.

Building and Developing Your Entrepreneurial Support Organization was the sub-theme of Day 2 of the workshop. There was a presentation on *Business Plan Competition Basics* as well as a keynote on the *Importance of Entrepreneurial Support Systems*. The workshop thereafter broke into three tracks where panel discussions were held respectively on *Funding Your Successful Support Organization*; *The Startup View from the Entrepreneur’s Perspective*; and *Creating Sustainable Local Enterprise Networks*. The track Panel discussions continued for the rest of the day with different topics of discussion.

The third day had the sub-theme “*Bridging the Gaps in the Global Ecosystem*”. A keynote paper – *Grassroots to Global: Online Incubation of Grassroots Innovations* was delivered by Professor Anil K. Gupta, Coordinator, SRISTI and Honey Bee Network. Panel discussions for the day centered on *Social Entrepreneurship in Emerging Markets*; *What Countries can do to Promote Entrepreneurship*; and *Collaboration across Borders*.

Overall the 10th Annual MIT \$100K GSW was a huge success as it was characterized by very high quality papers and presentations which were quite educative. It is worth mentioning that

the very high number of students' participation from different countries at the workshop was phenomenal.

In the curriculum review workshop organized by the National Universities Commission (NUC) in August 2004 with the theme “...*towards the production of better skilled and entrepreneurial graduates*”, entrepreneurial studies (the curriculum of which was earlier developed by the Commission) was introduced into the curriculum of Nigerian Universities. This was done to provide the avenue to adequately equip graduates of Nigerian Universities with the knowledge and skills that will make them start an enterprise of their choice; thereby making them employers of labour rather than job seekers. In the quest of facilitating the realization of this initiative, the NUC has been working with some national bodies and different international development partners towards the establishment of Entrepreneurial Studies Centres as well as train the teachers of entrepreneurial studies in Nigerian universities.

One of the lessons gained from the 10th MIT \$100K GSW was the impact of organizing Business Plan Competition amongst students to further help them catch the spirit of entrepreneurship. It is believed that getting corporate organizations to work with Nigerian University Students to organize Business Plan Competitions will further boost entrepreneurship in the universities thereby complementing the NUC's effort in this direction.

Nigeria has submitted a proposal to host the 11th GSW in 2008.

Happy Easter

Monday Bulletin wishes the NUC Christian Community a happy Easter celebrations.

Best wishes for the week.