

*Higher Education in Countries emerging from
Conflict: the Role of International Collaboration?
The case Study of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

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1. The state of art of the HEI in DRC

The DRC is a big country with huge and intractable issues. As it concerns the HEIs the stalemate stems from afar, from the consequences of the “nationalistic and authoritarian” policy implemented in the postcolony. The structural adjustment programmes also pushed the congolese State to the “deprioritization” of HEI: non state funds, ailments in infrastructures, bad conditions of work for students and teachers as well.

1. The state of art of the HEI ...ctnd

The conflicts exacerbate contradictions in DRC's HEIs such as:

- + growing creation of universities in the landscape dominated first by the State led-HEIs and nowadays the private HEIs,
- + increasing demand for higher education and specifically in Lubumbashi, a south area in DRC (public HEIs are more valued and are more under pressure for the enrolment demand),
- + spiral of uncoordinated demand-driven expansion,
- + dilapidated learning and physical infrastructure and deteriorating working conditions,
- + low staff morale,
- + worsening academic quality standards and patrimonialistic management of university resources
- + staggering budgetary deficits, all with the stream of brain drain and the DRC's university being disconnected from the global university

2. The International collaboration and the most urgent needs to be addressed

2.a. Strategies for facing the most urgent needs based upon:

- = the theory of “fusion by choice” (Assié-Lumumba). “The notion of fusion proposes a deliberate choice by Africa to appropriate some elements of their received institutions, values, and ways of doing things. These chosen elements can be added to, mixed and fused with African...realities” (Assié-Lumumba, 2006: 149),
- =support of local ownership and strengthening of the sustainability of the expected outcomes, and
- =funds given for intra-congolese workshops and staff exchanges from South to North so as to get a leadership having a vision and good ways of doing things

2. The International collaboration...ctnd

2.2. Collaborative approach for facing the challenge of academic/teaching personnel renewal:

- =Implementation of scholarship for doing research in situ (in DRC) with the option of a three-month stay in Belgium for updated library research,
- =university top management by letting the University produce its strategic development Plan
- =sureptice pressure for having the research culture. The HE ministry imposes many publications as criterion for promotion (publish or perish, as the saying goes on)
- =university social role more visible: community service adopted and an Unit for « Interface Université société » is working out

2. The International collaboration...ctnd

2.3. Issues of brain drain as it is tackled. Complex ones. Two ways of doing things are going on:

1°) for the assistants involved in the programme of completing the doctorate (Ph.D) there is a sealed commitment in the individual contract for « not staying abroad in the country where someone goes with the scholarship »,

2°) Congolese academic and scientific diaspora are involved in coming back home for lecturing in DRC's HEIs meanwhile keeping their activities in Europe (=circular migration). MIDA Belgium funded-programme is about this circular migration.
=*Brain drain* converted into *brain gain*?

Conclusion

International partnerships are of great value to DRC's HEIs. There is nowadays a global knowledge economy with some nations being connected while others are disconnected

=Globalization implies the emergence of the global university.

=The three missions of the HEIs in DRC are as follows:

- + teaching,

- + research , and

- + service to the community. There are implemented with difficulty

With the unending crisis induced from the failure of SAP and the patrimonialistic governance in DRC, HEIs face a predicament. Many HEIs are managed as there are bureaucratic institutions, trend to budgeted expenses led-stream. Transition to managerial institution is at the stake now thanks to international partnerships.

Conclusion

=Globalization calls for a global governance. It is worth not letting HEIs in DRC lag. Education is the door to growth and well managed sustainable development. Ill-educated people are passive and useless potentials. The global knowledge economy can but be supported by a high quality HEIs. Therefore, DRC is in need of graduates to be internationally knowledgeable and inter-culturally skilled for being able at home and abroad markets. The IP are a chance worth being encouraged, the constraints being that DRC's HEIs be led and managed by a visionary academic leadership so as to extend the advantages of the "fusion by choice" windows. An indigenous cultural engineering at the academic level is the stake to be mastered by DRC's academic leaders.

Thanks for your attention