



Academics without Borders

USF-AWB

Universitaires sans Frontières

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Higher education and employability in Africa

On June 8, 2013, a meeting was held in Paris about higher education and employability in Africa, meeting made under the aegis of the ISATIC Foundation the objective of which is the creation of a school of engineering in information technology in Douala, Cameroon. For more than two years, the association "Academics without borders" has been involved in this project.

Presently Africa is full of raw materials and of human resources: many people say that it will be the continent of the 21st century as it has for several years a growth rate over 5%. In addition, education is seen as one of the main source of economic growth, not only at the primary and secondary levels, but also in higher education levels. One of the identified obstacles is the inadequacy of the content to local context, because the majority of educational programs, even if they have been revisited since the end of colonization remains too often a copy-and-paste of European training courses.

Many examples of this inadequacy have been given: so the children are confronted with two different contexts which do not link school life and everyday life. The case of higher education comes complicated with brain drain that deprives Africa of its future elite and handicaps its future.

Facing this observation, hopes lie on a knowledge economy that would allow not only to train competent middle and executive managers but also promote the creation of companies related to the needs and local opportunities.

It was the key-reason for the inception of the ISATIC (African Institute for Information and Knowledge Technologies) which tries to answer to these questions: it will be a school for senior executives and middle managers. in technologies of information and communication, best adapted to Cameroon context.

This meeting was attended by about 30 people coming from various African organizations. The various interventions allowed to see more clearly the analyses of needs, opportunities, pitfalls to avoid and resounding failures. Generally speaking, they had allowed better focus the project and attempt to give a hint to answers.

Role of USF - AWB in this project

Practically from the inception USF - AWB has been requested for different tasks:

- helps the needs analysis and the definition of objectives,
- fine organization of training and education,

- recommendations on the premises and computer equipment,
- and assists in the recruitment of teachers.

In outline, the training will be organized according to two diplomas, a sort of bachelor degree in information technology, and then a Master degree with curricula inspired by the best schools in information technologies, with of course the concern of a perfect adaptation to African context.

These courses will be based on four pillars:

- technological training according to the outline given above,
- management and entrepreneurship,
- industrial component with mandatory internships in companies, the creation of a junior-enterprise and teachers coming from the industrial world,
- the international component with English language courses, internships abroad, etc.

For now, the guidelines and the business plan are almost ready. A situation worth watching? See <http://www.institut-isatic.org/> for more details. ■

R. Laurini, President of USF - AWB.

Other current actions

Presently, sometimes by itself or with some other partners, USF - AWB is involved in several projects; the most important include:

- in addition to the ISATIC, the design of another engineering school in Honduras,
- the organization of the first years of the Christophe Henry Campus of the State University of Haiti in the city of Limonade,
- a faculty of technology in the city of Jeremie, also in Haiti,
- an audit in a French-speaking university in Cambodia.

If you have any small or big project of modernization in your own university, or even a need of a particular teacher with a sharp profile request, USF - AWB with a list of almost 3000 names will likely help you: send an email in French, English or Spanish. Once the application is established, a memorandum of understanding will be signed and competent academics will come help you.

Similarly, if you urgently need a university professor with a very precise profile, do not hesitate to contact USF-AWB. ■