



# Academics without Borders

## USF-AWB

### Universitaires sans Frontières

Quarterly newsletter, 8, December 2012

#### Already three years!

Facing in one hand the existence of senior academics with large competence, and in the other hand universities located in some countries and seeking assistance to modernize, the inception of the association «Universitaires Sans Frontières - Academic Without Borders» took place three years ago and now an assessment can be issued. USF - AWB is then an NGO of 40 volunteer academic consultants with very diverse actions and coming from several countries (France, Spain, Italy, etc.) for sustainable development. This assessment will be organized into three sections, activities, presentations and partnerships.

#### Activities

One of our operating principles is that applicants must pay travel expenditures and accommodation of our consultants: if they are not able to invest this amount, we think that their project is not credible. The actions performed have been considerably variable in scope and in time. The first action was the establishment of training in telecommunications in Haiti which was repeated several times; and now it comes up to the creation of a complete professionalizing training in this area. Institutional engineering include the following projects:

- two schools of engineering, one in Douala (Cameroon), the other in Honduras,
- a faculty of mechanics in Beirut,
- a faculty of technology in Jeremie, Haiti,
- the assistance in the design of an original course of studies for a master's degree and a PhD in liaison with industries in Venice,
- 10-year long research guidelines for two research laboratories of information technology at El Oued (Algeria) and in Mexico City.

Let us mention also some other smaller activities, such as:

- organization of doctoral training for the University of Biskra in Algeria,
- practical advice for jointly-awarded PhD theses for the University of Rio Cuarto in Argentina,
- advice to strengthen the links with the industrial world (Oran, Bordj Bou Arreridj) in Algeria,
- organization of training for civil engineers in Mali
- advice for the teaching of French language in El Oued, Algeria and Agadir, Morocco.

In addition, we distributed calls for university professors either directly (Jendouba, Tunisia) or at the request of AHED (Ghana and Bhutan) and of AUF (Brazil).

Finally, AUF recently asked us to assist them in the

diffusion of free software products in the French-speaking universities.

#### Becoming better known

In order to recruit new members and to launch new activities, presentations were conducted in many places, either in universities or conferences with an audience ranging from 3 to 50 people, including the following locations:

- Africa: Biskra, El Oued, Bordj Bou Arreridj, Oran, Constantine, Tunis (two conferences and an engineering school), Hammamet, Mohammedia and Rabat;
- America: Sao Paulo, San José (Costa Rica), Puebla (two universities), San Jose (California), and Washington DC;
- Asia: Beirut (three different universities),
- Europe: Grenoble, Strasbourg, Salerno, Brescia, Naples, Cagliari, Potenza, Venice and Madrid.

Future presentations are planned in Toulouse and in Dublin. In parallel, the quarterly newsletter allows also to publicize our activities in French (2000 names) and English (800 names).

#### Partnerships

Agreements have been signed with several entities,

- TPA (Total Teachers Association), agreement on training in petroleum engineering;
- GREF (French association of retired educators without borders) specializing in primary and secondary schools, but with a small university branch;
- AHED (Academics for Higher Education and Development/ Universitaires pour l'Enseignement Supérieur et le Développement), association with similar aims but with powerful donors: last July, it changed its name into "Academics Without Borders Canada - Universitaires Sans Frontières Canada"; the agreement covers sharing of information and possible common activities.
- AUF (Agency of French-speaking universities) for possible collaborations.

In parallel, other contacts exist with other organizations dealing with international solidarity.

#### Perspectives

In the coming year, two projects seem to figure on the horizon, the assistance for a new university in the city of Limonade in Haiti and an audit at the Institute of Technology of Cambodia in Phnom Penh.

Let us wish a merry Christmas and a happy new year for you and your family. ■

Robert Laurini  
President of USF-AWB.