

Challenges and Opportunities for Studying Economics and Business Management in Africa

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Introduction

There is renewed interest in Collaboration between the German Government and African Governments in the areas of education, power, climate and trade (Punch, 2008).

On 11/11/08, the German President, Dr Horst Köhler visited Nigeria in that respect.

In his interaction with legislature in Nigeria it was pointed out to him that many Nigerians studied in Germany and therefore the training they received and the idea of German culture they had can be used to the mutual advantage of the two countries.

Similar initiatives are going on in other African countries. Because of the role that human capital plays in human development and economic growth, the collaboration and cooperation in education is important to this discussion.

Introduction (ctd.)

Education plays a significant role in human development through the process of empowering people to improve their well-being and to participate actively in building the nation (Nafula, 2002).

Analyses of international differences in output per worker and growth rates have also raised the awareness of the role of human capital in development either as a direct or as an indirect factor (Gundlach et al, 2001).

All these facts and observations make cooperation in the area of education, especially economic and business education, important to us. So I will devote this discussion to Economics and Business studies in Africa.

Introduction (ctd.)

Since economics is the study of alternatives, the German Government is right in seeking for different areas of collaboration and cooperation in the field of education, despite of the established relationships they have with other continents and countries.

However, the concerns of the intended beneficiaries of these education partnerships are, what are the risks associated with studying in Africa?, Do they have enough educational resources for effective studying in that continent? What are the socio-economic problems that they may likely encounter in Africa as a student? How will they confront the problems and solve them?

These are some of the issues I will be addressing in this discussion as they are related to studies of Economics and Business Management.

Risks Associated with Studying Economics and Business Management in African Universities

There is no continent without a risk, no matter how little. There are climatic factors, earthquakes, tsunamis, environmental problems, civil conflicts and wars, terrorist attacks, such as 9/11, etc. in every part of the world. So risk should not be a disincentive for studying in Africa.

However, these risks differ in degree from one country to the other. Ghana is classified as a low risk country; the country security risk in Ghana is less than the average for Europe. Other low security risk African countries with good universities are Botswana, Kenya, Senegal and even South Africa (Africa Risk Assessment, 2007).

Ghana is a country with most stable democracy and social life. The criminal rate in Ghana is less than the Africa's average. The education system and the standard is envy for other African countries.

More than 2 million cars are stolen in the UK each year, and 2.6 per cent of all owners have experienced a theft during their lifetime, making the UK the most dangerous place to own a car.(Europe Risk Assessment 2006)

Risk Associated with studying Economics and Business Management in Africa Universities (ctd.)

Table 1: Security Risk in African Countries

High Risk

Congo
DR Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Ethiopia
Guinea Bissau
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Nigeria
Rwanda
Sao Tome & Principe
Somalia
Sudan
Swaziland
Zimbabwe

Medium Risk

Angola
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Cote D'Ivoire
Eritrea
Gabon
Libya
Mauritania
Niger
Sierra Leone
Togo
Uganda
Zambia

Low Risk

Algeria
Benin
Botswana
Djibouti
Egypt
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Kenya
Lesotho
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Senegal
South Africa
Tanzania

Source: Africa Risk Assessment 2007

Risks Associated with Studying Economics and Business Management in African Universities (ctd.)

Nigeria is classified as a high risk level country, but the risk is localized in the oil-producing states of Niger-Delta. In fact, out of 9 nine oil-producing states only three of them - that produce about 75% of total oil produced in Nigeria - can be categorized as risk states (Alabi et al., 2008). In similar vein, no one of the renowned universities in Nigeria where Economics and Business management can be studied is located in these risk zones.

Moreover, the risk targets are not the students, but the oil workers. Another important information is that, generally, arm robbers in Africa fear white men and women (Americans and Europeans); the notion is that the whites have guns and so they can counter any attack on them. Generally, the perceived risk in Africa may not be higher than the one that is obtained for the average European countries.

Resources for Studying Economics and Business Management in African Universities

There are good African Universities that have many academic resources and facilities that are conducive for learning.

Some of them subscribe to international journals and academic materials online. The fact that economics and business studies are not capital-intensive courses make many African Universities to offer it easily (They do not require physical libraries and facilities like natural sciences, engineering and medicine).

In fact, with good library and internet availability, students can study Economics and Business Management easily in any African Universities.

The recent information is that Internet facilities are available in almost all Nigerian Universities, and they can be accessed through their website addresses (Nigeria has 99 universities). Some of them have started registering their students online.

Resources for Studying Economics and Business Management in African Universities (ctd.)

There are renowned universities where Economics and Business Management can be studied. Such as the University of Ghana in Ghana; the Ambrose Alli University in Nigeria; the University of Ibadan in Nigeria (where I studied), the University of Capetown in South Africa; the University of Nairobi in Kenya, etc.

These Universities are endowed with renowned economists and business administrators such as Prof Ernest Aryeetey of the University of Ghana. Prof. Aryeetey is popular for his focus on credit and household resources mobilization. He is the director of the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER). ISSER was established in 1962 by the University of Ghana, whose first director was Prof. Amartya Sen. ISSER also has a UN Statistical Training Centre.

Resources for Studying Economics and Business Management in Africa Universities (ctd.)

Prof. A. Oyejide of the University of Ibadan is popular for his papers on Economics of International Trade relations and the WTO.

Prof. S. Ajayi of the University of Ibadan has worked exhaustively on such topics as capital flight, external debt and globalization, areas in which he has carved out a niche for himself.

Prof. B. Aigbokhan of Ambrose Alli University is renowned for his popular work on poverty and inequality in Nigeria.

Prof. M. Mweya of the University of Nairobi has carved a niche for himself on Import Demand Elasticities and Trade Liberalization.

We have other renowned Professors of Economics and Business Management working also as consultants to international organizations such as UN, IMF, ILO, World Bank, UNDP, etc.

Resources for Researching in Economics and Business Management in African Universities

Apart from popular universities where economics and business administration can be studied, we have in Africa established research institutes and organizations for economics and business administration in Africa, such as:

1. Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER), Nigeria. www.niser.org.ng
2. Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Senegal. www.codesria.org
3. African Economic Research Consortium, Kenya. www.aercafrica.org
4. Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Ghana. www.issser.org

There are some other international economic research organizations where Africans are prominent, such as Profs. Fosu and Odedokun in the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER).

Conclusions and Recommendations

In this discussion, I have indicated that there are some challenges in studying Economics and Business Administration in Africa, as there are also challenges in other continents. However, the challenges are not insurmountable with commitment on the part of the interested students.

In concluding this presentation, I want to suggest African-German Scholar Partnerships (AGSP). The African-German Scholars are the Africans trained or schooled in Germany. Since they are familiar with the German culture, they will be the first point of call for the German students going to Africa. We have many of these scholars in Africa who have benefited in the forms of scholarship or research fellowships from DAAD or the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. These people are interested in helping German students when they come to study in Africa.

Many thanks for your Attention

Danke!!

Danke!!

Danke!!

When back to Nigeria, I can also advise and help
German students who are coming to Nigeria!!

Kommen Sie nach Nigeria, um bei uns
Ökonomie (Volkswirtschaft und
Betriebswirtschaft) zu studieren!!

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