

# Training of population specialists for Africa's needs: past, current and future

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## Abstract

*Africa has been training population specialists since the early 1960s, following some countries' acquiring political independence. The training has consisted of undergraduate degrees, post-graduate diplomas, masters, doctorates and post-doctorates at regional and national institutions as well as centres found outside the continent. Achievements of the training programme over several decades have included many population specialists trained and helping in implementing the population related projects in the region and building the capacity of several African population training centres. Challenges have consisted of inadequate financial support from development partners and regional and national governments, lack of scholarships for students, scarce research grants for staff and students, development partners' related issues, problems related to national and regional governments, lack of interest in supporting training of technical demographers, limitation of infrastructure for training, shortage of qualified trainers and unemployment of graduates in population studies. It is recommended that national governments and regional agencies provide core financing of African population training centres and only mobilize donor funding as supplementary. More focus should be directed to advanced research training to ensure that qualified population specialists lost to the brain drain and other factors are continuously replaced. African training institutions need to be more innovative and create new opportunities of sustainability when the support being received is stopped.*

## Introduction

Population issues in Africa have been important for a long time and became more important after the Second World War. For instance, population censuses in the form of headcounts and assemblies were started in some countries about a century ago and modern censuses and demographic surveys were also held since the late 1940s. Initially, these censuses and surveys were planned and conducted by the colonial governments using their own people. However, after African countries acquired independence in the 1950s

and 1960s, it was found necessary by the African governments to start training national human resources to manage population issues. The purpose of this paper is to review the training efforts of these human resources in the past and present and make suggestions for the future.

## Historical perspective

In the aftermath of political independence in Africa, it was realised that African governments needed to train specialists in managing population issues of the countries and to replace expatri-

ates. At the time, the major population issues to manage were the population censuses and demographic surveys. Hence, there was an emphasis on training technical demographers to conduct these inquiries. Because in the 1950s and 1960s there were no demographic training centres in Africa, the training was done outside the continent in Europe, North America and Australia at centres based at the Universities of London, Pennsylvania, Princeton and California at Berkley as well as the Australian National University and in France and Belgium. These centres trained Africans in technical demography, including demographic data collection and analysis.

It was not until the 1970s that African demographic training centres were set up by the United Nations to train demographers. The African centres were started as regional demographic/population centres to train Africans from specific language groups. The Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) based at the University of Ghana was to train demographers for Anglophone Africa, Institut de Formation et de Recherche démographiques (IFORD) in Yaounde, Cameroon, was established to cater for Francophone Africa and Cairo Demographic Centre in Egypt for the Middle East including Arab Africa. The only language group not catered for was the Lusophone (Portuguese-speaking Africa) perhaps because the concerned countries won political independence from Portugal later, in the mid-1970s, almost two decades after countries of other groups were independent. The idea of these regional training centres was to increase the number of demographers

trained at postgraduate diploma and masters levels to meet the needs of African governments for demographers. The centres in Europe, North America and Australia also continued training demographers for Africa at masters as well as doctorate levels. Alongside these regional centres, limited support was given to various national universities to teach courses in demography and population geography to undergraduates of sociology, geography and statistics. The Universities of Addis Ababa, Ghana, Lagos, Dar-es-Salaam, Nairobi and Makerere did this.

With time, the needs for demographers and population specialists expanded beyond managing population censuses and demographic surveys became multidisciplinary to include family planning, reproductive health and population-related development issues. In the 1980s, UNFPA decided to set up national offices with expanded programmes. These programmes were further expanded in the aftermath of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, which required UNFPA, other development partners and individual countries of the world including those in Africa to scale up their reproductive health programmes. This meant that the number of population specialists required to manage these issues increased considerably, hence the few demographic training centres in Africa were inadequate and needed increasing. UNFPA and other development partners, such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the Population Council, decided to support national universities to train demographers and population specialists. The Population Council of

New York assisted the establishment of the Population Studies and Research Institute at the University of Nairobi in 1977. UNFPA helped set up a department of population studies at Makerere University, and the demographic units of the Universities of Dar-es-Salaam and Addis Ababa in the late 1980s. Also in the late 1980s, other demographic training centres were set up in the southern African countries of Malawi, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho with the assistance of UNFPA to train demographers at undergraduate level. In the last decade Makerere University also joined the southern African universities in running an undergraduate training degree in population studies in addition to postgraduate degrees. In West Africa, a demographic training centre was set up at Awolowo Obafemu University in Nigeria, which conducted similar training at undergraduate level in addition to postgraduate training in demography. Also set up in Nigeria were population training units at Lagos, Ibadan and Ondo State universities to conduct postgraduate training. In addition, regional centres in Dakar (Senegal), Rabat (Morocco) and Gaborone (Botswana) were established by UNFPA specifically for training Africans in population and development issues at masters level in the 1990s, but closed shop towards the end of the 1990s. Recently, some South African universities including the Universities of Cape Town and Durban and North Western and Witwatersrand universities have been running masters' degree programmes in demography/population studies.

As population training centres in Africa increased and the subject of pop-

ulation studies expanded, there was a need to change topics of training. Although technical demography of data collection and analysis remained important in the training, the scope of training expanded to population studies including substantial demography and emerging issues (eg. HIV/AIDS, environment and reproductive health).

### **Advanced research training in Africa**

While the immediate needs for population specialists to implement various population programmes in Africa have largely been met by graduates of the training institutions at undergraduate, postgraduate diploma and masters' levels, the needs for research and academia have not been satisfied. Due to a constant brain drain of highly trained population specialists and demographers, it has been necessary for African institutions to keep training Africans up to the PhD level in order to satisfy new demands from expanded population programmes and to keep replacing the demographers and population specialists leaving their countries and even the continent. Ad hoc PhD training has taken place at various national and regional institutions on the continent. The Cairo Demographic Centre, RIPS, universities of Dar-es-Salaam, Lagos, Awolowo Abafemu, Ibadan, Lagos, Ondo State, Makerere and Nairobi and others in the region have used their meagre resources to train demographers at PhD level, but the impact has been minimal due to the few PhDs they produce. For instance, Makerere has produced only 5 PhD holders in the last 22 years of the existence of the department of population

studies, of whom only two are still in the university's employment. Collaboration between Johns Hopkins University and Makerere and Nairobi Universities have produced a few PhD graduates (3 for Makerere and 2 for Nairobi) supported by the Mellon Foundation. Unfortunately, this initiative was too brief and limited to have a lasting impact on research and academic development in Africa. For instance, of the 5 PhDs produced by this collaboration scheme, only 1 in Nairobi and none in Makerere are still in the university's service. The other four have joined other organizations – one with UNDP in Southern Sudan, another in the World Bank, the third in Botswana and the fourth with the Kenyan Government.

More recently, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has supported PhD training at the Universities of Cape Town, Ghana and the Witwatersrand and the impact of the initiative on meeting the needs of Africa for PhD graduates is awaited. In addition for several years now the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has run fellowships for PhD students who have completed their coursework and are starting the research and dissertation stage. In theory, these fellowships can be competed for by those PhD students in African institutions. However, the fellowships assume that the students are following the American model of PhD of doing coursework and dissertation which is not the case in African institutions where PhD is mostly done by research and thesis alone, taking between 3 and 4 or even more years depending on the challenges of research, most of which have involved field work. Although

these fellowships have been advertised widely through IUSSP and UAPS websites, very few if any students in African institutions have been beneficiaries. Although the fellowship scheme pays for two years of tuition when the beneficiary is being supported, it assumes that the student has funds to sponsor him/herself during the pre-dissertation period, which is difficult for the majority of students at African institutions.

Perhaps a more promising scholarship scheme is that started by a Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA). These are recent fellowships available to the consortium of nine African universities and four African research institutes in collaboration with eight universities and institutions from the developed regions. One of the aims of CARTA fellowship programmes is supporting promising African scholars who teach at affiliated universities to obtain high-quality doctoral training in public and population health-related fields. This aim is in response to the great challenges faced by Africa's institutions of higher education in addressing the training and retention of the next generation of academics in the region. The programme offers a substantial number of PhD fellowships; for instance, 25 are currently being advertised for the academic year 2011/2012. These fellowships are tenable at the nine participating African institutions and give the PhD candidate a monthly stipend, grant for research, laptop and relevant software and funds for conference attendance and advanced seminars organized annually by the program to strengthen the background of candidates in conducting research. Each fellowship runs up to

four years, which is adequate for PhD programmes run by African institutions. On the surface, this fellowship programme seems to have addressed the current shortage of fellowships for African population institutions which need to further train their academic staff in order to enhance the capacity of the institutions.

However, this programme is not exclusively for the field of population studies/demography, but other fields including Epidemiology, Psychology, Biostatistics, Anthropology, Health Economics, Health Promotion, Sociology, Health Systems, Health Policy, and Development Studies. This implies that of 25 fellowships for 2011/12, the field of population studies may end up with a few fellowships per year, which is a drop in the ocean for the demands for training from population training institutions in the region. Secondly, the fellowships are given to candidates doing research in health related topics, which excludes those researching other areas of population studies and demography, such as migration and demographic modelling that can not relate their topics to health. Thirdly, it is not clear who is to pay the tuition fees of the beneficiary.

Other scholarship schemes that have been set up to help in the training of PhD candidates in demography/population studies include THRiVE (Training Health Researchers into Vocational Excellence in East Africa) supported by the Wellcome Trust in England, IRD (French Research Institute for Development) fellowships and the Commonwealth scholarships. THRiVE scholarship programme which started in 2011 involves support of 4 years to

PhD candidates that have been registered in the home partner institutions in East Africa. The scheme pays tuition fees, subsistence allowances, supervision costs, research work and travel expenses. The candidates are mentored and supervised by academic staff from the East African institutions jointly with academic staff of Cambridge University and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Post-doctoral candidates are also supported by THRiVE. The scheme enables beneficiaries to visit Cambridge University and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to access specialized training courses, lectures and seminars. However, the scholarships are for health researchers, not for demographers/population specialists who may benefit because of their research project being related to health and are exclusively for seven East African institutions, including only three universities of which demography/population studies is taught in only one. As a matter of fact, of 13 PhD candidates and four post-doctoral fellows supported in 2011, there is only one demographer/population specialist.

The IRD fellowships are from a French based Research Institution for Development. These fellowships are also for partner institutions in the developing world where IRD researchers are based. PhD candidates who are working in a country team with IRD researchers are eligible to apply. The fellowship scheme is not for demographers and population specialists alone, but for many disciplines, including agriculture, climate change, energy, environment and natural resources. This makes the fellowships very competitive

for demographers/population specialists and hard to get.

The Commonwealth scholarship schemes have been in existence for a long time and have helped some institutions in the Commonwealth to train population specialists up to PhD level. However, these scholarships are few and highly competitive between Commonwealth countries, institutions and within the institutions and a demographer/population specialist winning one of the scholarships would be rare.

In the 1970s and 1980s, UNFPA had PhD scholarships attached to their training institutions, like RIPS, IFORD and Makerere, but these were discontinued in the last two decades without explanation to the beneficiary institutions.

Perhaps the best known African population research training centre is the African Population and Health Research Centre in Nairobi, set up in the 1990s through collaboration between the Rockefeller and the Population Council in New York with the purpose of promoting research training in the region. The centre has been targeting African PhD holders and offering them post-doctoral research opportunities. While many young African demographers and population specialists have been mentored, research projects in Africa have been done and publications made at this centre, one centre serving over 50 African countries has been an impossible task, leading to either concentrating on a few countries and ignoring others or thinly spreading the centre activities across Africa and hence having little impact. One shortcoming of the outcomes of this centre is that while the original

expectation of the centre was that African post-doctoral fellows were to use the centre as an entry point to their original countries' demographic training institutions in order to transfer the knowledge acquired at the centre, most of the beneficiaries have either continued at the centre or sought employment in institutions in the region that would pay them more juicy salaries than their home institutions could offer. Hence, the centre has not helped build the human resource capacity of African population institutions, but rather has sometimes contributed to the brain drain.

Another approach of training population specialists is the use of short term courses. This is a popular approach to development partners who argue that the approach is a less expensive way of converting non-population specialists into population specialists. Hence, sociologists, economists, doctors, geographers, social workers and others have been recruited by many international and national agencies to manage population issues. The assumption is that after undergoing short courses these professionals related to demography and population studies will improve their skills and perform the same tasks as those trained to be demographers and population specialists. While this approach has worked for professionals working in population policy and programme areas, the professionals have found it difficult to do the job of technical demographers, such as analysis of population censuses and surveys.

## **Achievements**

Over several decades of training African demographers and population special-

ists, the continent has registered several notable successes. Hundreds of population specialists have been trained in Africa and overseas. The national and regional training institutions have produced many population specialists that have been instrumental in the implementation of various population related programmes. This has ensured successful implementation of ICP, MDGs, HIV/AIDS and other population related programmes in the region. Also implemented are population censuses and surveys conducted in all African countries.

Secondly, as these training programmes were being carried out, it was necessary to set up and build capacity of the training institutions. All over Africa, especially in the Anglophone countries, many national population training institutions were set up to supplement and complement the regional institutions to equip many Africans with skills to plan and manage population related programmes in the region. While the initial capacity of the regional training institutions was heavily funded by development partners, many of the national institutions were greatly assisted by the national budgets to start and conduct the programmes. For instance, most of the instructors at these centres are being paid by funds from national sources. In some cases, like Makerere university, Uganda, the financing of the training programmes, such as payment of tuition fees, research expenses, accommodation and other student maintenance expenses were mostly funded by national governments and parents. This has ensured sustainability of these training programmes. From the tuition fees, the

training institutions topped up salaries and wages of their employees and bought computer equipment for training the students.

### **Challenges in population training of Africans**

The first challenge has been financial. All the regional training institutions were started with initiative and funding from UNFPA, with little input from the African governments in the sub-region served by the institutions. UNFPA used to pay for scholarships for supporting sub-regional students at the centres and for expatriate staff. When later UNFPA stopped funding these institutions, the support from sub-regional governments was not forthcoming and for some time the institutions were limping financially until the host governments took over the responsibility of financing them as in case of RIPS and CDC. However, in the process, some of the institutions lost the capacity to attract regional students without scholarships to support the students and to employ expensive international and regional academic staff. Other institutions, like the ones in Botswana and Rabat conducting population and development programmes, were closed and their programmes restructured and integrated into the national institutional teaching programmes, which have different goals.

Even the national training institutions, when they lost the substantial support from the development partners, started limping. The training centres in Dar-es-Salaam, Nairobi and Makerere have greatly been affected by the phasing out of funding by UNFPA and other development partners. Their capacity in terms of equipment is inade-

quate and does not fully support the number of students at the centres. The institutions also have space limitations and cannot expand enough to serve their national needs. Some of the masters programmes have been attracting few students because of a lack of scholarships for students.

The lack of research grants to academic staff has discouraged staff from doing research where several students can benefit by using data for their dissertations. This problem has also created low morale among academic staff who cannot publish and hence cannot be promoted and develop their careers, leading to the staff spending much of their time doing consultancies, often leading to abandoning the academic career for outside opportunities to fulfil their goals and ambitions. Furthermore, the shortage of scholarships for students has resulted in students' spending a lot of time doing jobs as they study to ensure survival of themselves and family. Others have dropped out of their studies midway due to a lack of money to continue, especially at the stage of dissertation; hence they do not become demographers or population specialists. This problem has affected many (about half) of the students that originally registered and completed their coursework in Makerere and other East African institutions.

Another challenge concerns problems related to development partners. Some development partners are now interested in institutions with enough capacity to match the resources of donors. They need human resources and space capacity on the ground, which are not adequate in most of African centres. As a result, the develop-

ment partners have decided to support South African institutions with the financial muscle to provide space, equipment and human resources to match the support from donors. In the process, the poor centres have lost out on the support and hence found it difficult to train anymore.

Insistence that the research priorities of donors be adhered to is a further challenge to the training of African population related specialists. Often donors decide that their research money is given to investigate particular topics. Institutions and individuals who need money to carry out research that may lead to PhD may have a priority that is different, which disqualifies them from benefiting from the support. At one time, the department of population studies at Makerere was requested to do research in urbanization problems, when we considered our priority to be fertility and HIV/AIDS. The donor refused to fund our research agenda and we lost out on research that our PhD students could have benefitted from. In Makerere University there are several scholarships to support PhD and masters research in topics like food, nutrition and value addition, which are remotely related to the population studies and demography fields. Unfortunately, some donors do not sit down with institutions to agree on the priority areas of research.

Donor fatigue is another challenge to the training of population specialists for Africa. In the 1970s and 1980s, population issues were very popular for funding and there was a lot of support for funding Africans who wanted to study population studies. I remember in early 1990s, the Rockefeller Foundation



gave a demographic training grant to Makerere where anyone admitted to an MA (demography) programme was funded to completion of studies. Using this grant, Makerere trained many demographers and population specialists for Uganda, which has ensured availability of demographers and population specialists that have sustained the current needs of the country. UNFPA had similar arrangement for the university of Dar-es-Salaam that met the needs of Tanzania at the time. However, in the last decade, it has been a big challenge to raise money from the same development partners to support training population specialists because the donors are tired of supporting this area and have moved on to other fields, such as agriculture and medicine.

Problems related to African governments have also been challenges to training population specialists. Many African governments are not investing enough in training population scientists. This is because university education is not a high priority of many African governments. The government funding of its universities is limited and very little if any money is allocated to postgraduate and research degree studies, the level at which population specialists are mostly trained. Secondly, some government leaders are not convinced of the need to solve current population problems like high fertility and high population growth rates and hence they are reluctant to support studies and research that would contribute to the solution of population problems.

Recently, donors have avoided funding technical demography. Any recent funding of training population specialists in Africa has focused on areas

related to reproductive health and very little has been devoted to technical demography. As a result, very few students who are training are encouraged to specialize in technical demography. This has meant that population census programmes usually planned and conducted by technical demographers have shortage of national expertise to advise and manage the data collection, processing and analysis. It is not surprising that many African statistical offices continue to rely on foreign experts to do the censuses and surveys.

Space and inadequately qualified academic staff have been challenges to several African population training institutions. All population training institutions are funded by their national governments with limited budgets which cannot afford infrastructure. Because of limited infrastructure in terms of offices, lecture rooms, laboratory rooms and libraries, the institutions have found it difficult to admit large numbers of students into their undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. To make the situation worse, the instructors are inadequate and would not be enough to supervise large numbers of students. This is because the institutions lack the capacity to train more academic staff up to PhD level and sustain them.

Unemployment for graduates in Africa has discouraged suitable students to register for admission to population training programmes. Although this problem appears a contradiction to the above arguments of the high demand for population specialists, it is true that many Africans after successfully completing their undergraduate work in population studies are unemployed, in

spite of the many needs by various employers for their services. The reason is the lack of coordination and policies by many governments on whom they depend. Sometimes, due to a lack of proper planning and often due to corruption, many positions of population specialists are vacant when those who are supposed to fill them are on the streets looking for jobs. This is not unique to population specialists, but even for more demanded professionals like medical doctors when the health centres are not manned and engineers when roads need many of them.

### **The future prospects**

Several initiatives have recently been proposed to meet the training needs of African population specialists. These have included proposed training programme of the Partners in Population and Development (PPD). The programme is in the form of modular courses that are recommended training centres in developing Africa, including African countries for adoption and integration into their programmes. The courses comprise reproductive health, population and poverty and population and gender issues. This initiative if adopted by African institutions would improve the content of the courses in the three issues and make the graduates from the courses more relevant and marketable.

A second initiative is the recent proposed programme of online masters in population analysis to be funded by UNFPA in collaboration with the International Union for Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP). The programme was recently tendered for bidding by population training institutions; the

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in collaboration with several training institutions in developing region including Africa has won it. If the programme works out, it would produce technical demographers that will greatly benefit Africa. It is hoped that this programme will eventually be replicated in Africa to enable the institutions there to offer cheap online programme to their catchment areas. However, what is unknown at this stage is if the students studying online would need to pay any fees, which could be unaffordable to students in Africa if based on the UK university fees structure.

A local initiative in South Africa is by the North West University of South Africa. This is a regional based programme for Africa that intends to train Africans in population research, policy and programme nexus. Its main objective is to enhance knowledge in doing population research that is applicable to population policy and programmes in the region. This initiative is to help in training population specialists at post-graduate level who would relate themselves to relevant population policy and programmes in the region.

Another future prospect is to take advantage of the existing datasets created out of censuses and surveys. In the recent times, most African countries have conducted population and housing censuses with many variables to be analysed by postgraduate students. Similarly, many demographic related sample surveys including numerous demographic and health surveys, HIV/AIDS sero surveys, malaria surveys and budget household surveys have been conducted in most African countries. All these have datasets that have been collected and compiled free of charge to the institutions and are available to

national users including students. Use of these datasets will cut out the expensive stage of data collection and entry in terms of time and cost. In many cases the lecturers of the students would have been involved in the planning, collection, processing and initial analysis and write up of the data. Further analysis is necessary for deeper understanding of the variables beyond the initial technical report. This is the stage that postgraduate students can be used to help the collecting institution to further analyse the data and use the results for write up of their dissertations. This is not limited to masters students, but even PhD students. Although it is ideal that PhD students demonstrate skills to plan and execute a research project right from the beginning, lack of funding to support such expensive venture dictates that further analysis of data is sufficient. After all, this is what is happening in most training institutions in developed countries and their graduates are not found wanting. The use of these datasets will call for closer collaboration between the training institutions and government institutions that own the data.

Currently most, if not all, training institutions in Africa have been following the model of the students doing research and preparing a thesis, which is the original British model. However, there is the model practised in some European and American schools of the students undergoing some taught courses related to demography/population studies and doing an examination which the student is required to pass before being allowed to do research and preparing a dissertation. It is recommended that this second model be tried in African institutions along with the approach of doing thesis alone for some time and then evaluated. This is

because both models have advantages. For instance, while the thesis alone model may be cheaper for the poor countries to fund, the coursework-dissertation model will equip the student with more knowledge on topics outside his/her research area that strengthens the background of the student and may be handy later in life. The British model may encourage a lazy student to be narrow minded, while the European-American model would force the same student to be broad minded. Furthermore, the thesis alone model may be more realistic in the present inadequacies of African institutions where there are too few qualified academic staff to lecture and supervise postgraduate students later alone teaching PhD courses.

A critical question African population training institutions have to answer in order to progress or regress is whether they can continue relying on donors to support their training programmes or innovate ways of supporting themselves and becoming financially autonomous of donors. The path of continuing with donors who may ditch them any time is too risky to take. It is high time, African institutions prevailed on their national governments in one way or other to acquire support for their programmes. This can be in form of the institutions supplying services to the national governments and getting paid or supplying advisory services in order to impress and convince the governments that the institutions should be given a high priority in the national budgeting process. Charging tuition fees to students can also be used to pay for some of the essential facilities of the institutions, like buying computer equipment for teaching purposes and

topping up salaries of academic staff of the institutions as incentives to retaining staff. Where professional services of the staff are supplied to governments and non-government institutions and paid for, a big percentage of the fees for these services can be paid to staff.

There is need to encourage academic staff of the training institutions to use the existing datasets from the population censuses and surveys to publish papers from there. This can be done by individual staff alone or in combination with their students who should co-author the papers. Many of the PhD theses and masters' dissertations are lying in the university libraries without being published, which is a waste of time and money spent on preparing them, since few people know about and can access them. Getting them published as papers or even as books does not need a lot of time and money, but a couple of modifications here and there and submission to journals and publishers. Currently, there are many journals in Africa that are lacking good and well researched papers that would welcome these papers with open hands.

An additional prospect is for two or more institutions to work together to teach and supervise PhD students. This idea has been discussed in several fora, but implementation has been difficult for selfish reasons because some institutions want to be centres of such consortium and leave out other partners who are not ready to be left out. The proposal is for these institutions to sit together and identify strength and weaknesses of each member institution and plan how to share resources, especially the skills of each academic staff in delivering lectures and supervision of students. East African institutions composed of Addis Ababa, Dar-

es-Salaam, Nairobi and Makerere universities can be one consortium, while the Southern African institutions in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa can do the same. Several Nigerian universities including Awolowo, Ibadan, Lagos, Ondo State and others in East and Northern Nigeria can form a consortium, while universities of Ghana, Cape Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone can be another consortium. The Francophone African institutions teaching demography/population studies can combine with IFORD and have a consortium.

### **The way forward**

The past has witnessed many achievements which need to be sustained and improved on. To do this, African governments should realize that they need to support these training institutions and own the programmes that would produce specialists to be used to solve African population problems. Secondly, development partners funding should be considered by African institutions as supplemental, rather than core funding of training facilities. Also, the development partners need to be more flexible and fund countries' priorities more than their own agendas. Thirdly, after several decades of not training population specialists at PhD level, it is necessary for UNFPA and the leading player in the field of population, to think seriously reviving their advanced population programme with the aim of replacing the aging researchers trained in 1970s and 1980s. Such programme should now be implemented by the African institutions as in-house training, as a way of reducing brain drain. Fourthly, in addition to being supported by their governments and development partners, the African institutions would need to be more

innovative and create new opportunities of sustainability when the support will be stopped.

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Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife website: [http://oauife.edu.ng/faculties/soc\\_sciences/demography/underg.htm](http://oauife.edu.ng/faculties/soc_sciences/demography/underg.htm) and [http://oauife.edu.ng/faculties/soc\\_sciences/demography/graduate.htm](http://oauife.edu.ng/faculties/soc_sciences/demography/graduate.htm)

Partners in Population and Development programme: <http://www.partners-popdev.org/>

Population Studies and Research Institute, University of Nairobi website: <http://psri.uonbi.ac.ke/>

Regional Institute for Population Studies, University of Ghana, Legon website: <http://www.ug.edu.gh/rips/index1.php?linkid=388>

THRiVE (Training Health Researchers into Vocational Excellence in East Africa) website: <http://www.thrive.or.ug/>