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Capacity Building in Education Sector: An Exploratory Study on Indian and African Relations

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Abstract

South-South Cooperation is a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, sub-regional or interregional basis. Developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts. Looking at the past two decades there has been a surge in South-South economic cooperation—including trade, investment, development assistance and other financial flows. Furthermore, China, India and Brazil are also increasingly active as so-called ‘emerging donors’, both in Africa and in their respective neighbourhood, and the past years have witnessed an unprecedented growth of what can be called ‘South–South aid.’

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1. Introduction

A working definition of capacity and its dimensions is needed before understanding different options Africa has to address in building academic capacity. Capacity means having the aptitudes, resources, relationships and

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facilitating conditions required to act effectively to achieve specified mandates. Capacity is conceptualized at three levels—individuals, work environment or organization, and institutions.

Around the world, some 75 million children – more than half of them girls – have no opportunity to attend primary school. One in three children’s in Africa that are enrolled in school drop out of primary education. In most developing countries, the budgets allocated for education are too low to meet requirements and to achieve the goal of universal compulsory school attendance. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), developing countries spend an average of 4.4 per cent of their national income on education. The United States and countries in Western Europe invest 5.5 per cent on average; some countries even invest more than 8 per cent on education. Bad governance, high staff turnover, inefficient use of funding, corruption and lack of management and organizational skills are other obstacles to the universal provision of education.

Across the board, there's increasing concern about the sky high rates of graduate unemployment on the one hand - and the shortage of specialist skills on the other. In fact, the skills shortage has been identified as one of the biggest obstacles for the government to reach its economic growth targets. Nearly two and a half million young South Africans are currently out of work and not in school – with staggering socio-economic implications. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the development in education sector in terms of entrepreneurship and skill development.

The education sector has a critical role to play in any country’s development but the role is particularly acute when it comes to those countries that are at the start up or take off stage of development, or those that are seeking to recover from periods of stagnation and slow pace of development. In the case of Africa, many countries are celebrating 50 years since independence, and are in the process of taking stock of what has been achieved. Some countries in Africa have done very well becoming now the group of countries “to watch” with high growth rates. Between 2001 and 2010 there were six African countries that had the highest growth rates including Angola at number one, Nigeria at number four, and Ethiopia at number five. The Economist projects that between 2011 and 2015 there will be seven African countries in the top ten fastest growing economies in the world, with countries like Mozambique, Tanzania, Congo and Ghana entering the top ten. While a lot has been achieved in Africa, it is not universal, and indeed a number of challenges remain. Furthermore, new constraints have emerged on the horizon, many of which are reliant on or derived from academic capacity or the lack of it.

While there are many issues that impact on education capacities, four aspects stand out—

i. How to finance education?;
ii. The policy reforms needed for an effective functioning of education systems;
iii. How to enhance research capacity?; and
iv. How to support innovation in education?

This paper would discuss: (a) India’s role in the evolution of development landscapes in Africa over the past decades; (b) As a provider of development assistance, the distinguishing features of India’s development partnership approach; (c) Suggestions to evolve partnerships for inclusive development, especially with objective of innovating South-South Cooperation.

2. Methodology

Qualitative method of enquiry has been employed for investigating the available information and the conclusions drawn are only propositions (informed assertions). Also, as the purpose of the research is to gain familiarity and gain insight into the Indo-African relations in the Education arena, and find answers to ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘when’, exploratory research design (also known as formulate research) has been used. As the analysis of Social and Economic changes were to be understood, available secondary data was scanned to capture the policy changes in the Indo-African education arena.

3. Discussion:

3.1. Role of academic capacity:

Countries need to address how the education system can generate the types of people and research needed to resolve the challenges facing Africa. Particularly, what areas to prioritize in building capacity for new and emerging
challenges, which will render universities and training centres relevant for Africa’s future development. Countries also would need to consider how to best utilize existing capacity to deliver on key objectives, with higher education institutions providing their talent in critical areas of capacity. How to develop new capacity where the capacity that exists is not sufficient for enhanced performance is also an area needing consideration. Universities can provide the space for re-skilling, retooling and continuous learning, adjusting their output of graduates and research to better match demands, and bridging the performance gap in the public and private sector.

One key role education systems need to play is in the innovation and learning systems at societal and economy levels. How can the education system be used to generate economic prosperity and contribute to increased economic productivity is one key research question. The education system can generate the right types of graduates and relevant research outputs if the incentives to reward learning, creativity, innovation and effective use of good ideas are in place. Education systems can contribute towards producing skilled people who can create and use knowledge effectively, thus raising the quality of administrative decisions and capability at the country level. Young people are shaped by their education experience. Provided with access to an information infrastructure that facilitates dialogue and exchange, they can get easy access to ideas and can contribute even further to national transformation.

The results of the assessment of capacity in Africa indicate that there has been steady progress in improving the policy environment, and indeed that education systems have generated skilled people who were competent enough to define and formulate policies for development. However, insufficient progress has been achieved in getting processes for implementation. We have yet to see significant development results and capacity development outcomes (individual skills and organizational competences). Education systems have not met the skill needs of the economy and have not generated people who can solve problems on the ground and implement solutions in innovative ways to achieve development results.

3.2. Developing capacity and Role of education:

Education provides the foundation for strategic thinking and development initiatives. This includes providing a pool of people with the basic knowledge and skills for strategic thinking, whether in farming, family planning, or running a logistics company. More complex capacities in the areas of formulating policies and programs that work and finding ways to implement those programs efficiently are another output of educational systems structured to directly support development activities. Having people with the skills for observation and follow through is also a critical requirement of any educational system. Education also provides the ground for research and innovation. This includes generation of new ideas through research and development and experimental actions that support testing and piloting. There is also the role of education systems to provide the basic skills for assessment, evaluation, and benchmarking which aids evolution and improvement of initial ideas. Then there is the critical learning in educational systems around using and sharing information and ideas such as in the use of libraries, participation in workshops, involvement in seminars and conferences.

Africa is improving in its ability to provide basic education, particularly aided by the Millennium Development Goals. The main challenge has been assuring the quality of education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels which has been weakened by poor inputs at the primary level and poor outputs as well. The number of students repeating primary education as they failed to pass common exams has increased since 2005, indicating a worsening of quality of primary education. The numbers of graduates from the basic education system has been growing but the graduates have not exited the system with the requisite basic skills for effective functioning in society. The quality of education has also been affected by inadequate investment in the education sector (educational infrastructure like libraries and laboratories), which has not kept up with demographic pressures. Literacy rates have improved in Africa over the period, particularly among young females. However, challenges remain when it comes to adult female literacy rates, which remain lower than those of men. Given the importance of a mother’s education in early childhood development, it is not surprising to see the deterioration in quality of outputs at the primary school level. Major strides have been made by countries to invest in information and communications technologies (ICT) but Africa is still behind in the Internet backbone that is critical for innovation systems.

3.3. Projects of India to support Africa:

Right from the outset, India saw the developmental challenge as an international responsibility. Economic and technical assistance from developed countries to developing countries was considered an obligation, not charity. In
its own modest programs for assistance to other developing countries, India deliberately rejected the donor-recipient paradigm and adopted the concept of development cooperation.

This had significant consequences:

1. Development cooperation incorporated the idea of partnership, of working for mutual benefit rather than promoting a patron-client relationship which suggested an unequal dependency.
2. Development cooperation was based on the priorities determined by the partner and not by the source of funds or technical capacity. The selection of projects and method of implementation was arrived at through a consultative process, not imposed by a “donor”.
3. The objective of such cooperation is to create a higher level of capacities enabling the relationship to be expanded and upgraded in subsequent stages. Instead of prolonged dependency, the objective would be to create mutually beneficial interdependency.

In the multilateral sphere, India has been a very active proponent of, and willing participant in programs such as the Colombo Plan, the Special Commonwealth Assistance for Africa Programme (SCAAP), the Technical Assistance Programme of the U.N. and its specialized agencies and activities under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the various UN Regional Commissions. On the bilateral side, the Government of India established a new division in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to deal with the whole gamut of development cooperation, in 1961. This was known as the Economic and Coordination Division. In 1964, the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme was launched, as part of the new Division, to manage India’s growing development cooperation activities. The activities excluded were those involving neighbouring countries, such as Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka, which continued to be handled by the respective territorial divisions in the MEA.

A. ITEC

The ITEC Programme pursues its mandate of promoting development cooperation through an interconnected set of activities, which have now expanded significantly to merit a separate division within the MEA:

• **Capacity Building:** The ITEC programme helps in capacity building through (i) the offer of technical training slots to personnel from developing countries in the very large network of vocational and human resource development institutions across India; (ii) the deputation of Indian experts to developing countries to train local personnel, impart specialized skills and know-how in different fields. In addition, the ITEC programme facilitates study visits to India by senior political leaders and decision-makers from developing countries to acquaint them with the opportunities India offers in enhancing development cooperation with these countries.

• **Project Assistance:** The ITEC Division has a modest programme for extending project assistance to developing countries, in particular, in the small and medium industry sector. These may include agricultural processing, manufacture of agricultural tools, carpentry, plastic molding, brick making, among others. Typically, the ITEC Division assists with project identification, the drawing up of a feasibility report, project implementation and the training of local personnel to eventually manage and run the project on their own. It may be noted that India’s project assistance is not loaded with administrative expenses to be borne by the recipient, a common practice in OECD aid.

• **Institution Building:** Drawing from its own development experience, India sets great store by capacity-building and the promotion of skills. While training of foreign personnel in India and the deputation of Indian experts abroad are important means to achieve this, a more sustainable, long-term solution lies in the building of appropriate institutions in partner countries. These may include vocational training institutes, entrepreneurship development institutes, and specialized institutes to foster skills in specific areas such as agriculture and animal husbandry, ICT and business management, among others. India spends $12 million on ITEC activities annually. Since 1964, the cumulative figure on this account is $2.8 billion, with $1 billion going to Africa. 40 per cent of the ITEC budget is devoted to project assistance. It may be noted that the Government of India has empanelled 48 prestigious institutions to offer as many as 220 courses in a wide variety of disciplines.

• **Scholarships:** India has a long tradition of providing opportunities for higher education to students from developing countries. These may be for graduate and post-graduate courses in prestigious Indian universities, covering a wide range of disciplines in the humanities, science and technology and professional areas such as engineering and medicine. These scholarships are administered through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.
(ICCR), although some scholarships may also be offered under the aegis of other institutions. Several universities also offer self-financing placements to foreign students and this number is now several times that of placements under government scholarships. It may be noted that several Central Ministries of the Government of India have their own International Cooperation Divisions which promote bilateral exchanges with their counterpart in other developing countries. Such exchanges involve joint projects, capacity building programs and visits of experts, which contribute significantly to South-South Cooperation.

B. Lines of Credit

In additional to the ITEC programme, India’s development cooperation also encompasses the extension of concessional loans and credits as well as outright grants to partner countries. These are administered by the Indian Ministry of Finance in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs. These Lines of Credit and Grants may be to cover specific projects, to provide, in a limited number of cases, budgetary support or emergency disaster relief.

C. Trade and Investment

India’s approach to development cooperation encompasses the promotion of trade and investment. Since such cooperation is not conceived as a donor-recipient relationship, our cooperation programs in developing countries are often designed, as an additional objective, to promote bilateral trade and investment, which would strengthen South-South Cooperation and bring mutual economic benefits to the partners. The credit line enables entry into a new market but any subsequent expansion of sales depends upon the competitiveness in terms of quality and price. The development cooperation programs may include helping the Indian private sectors to hold regular expositions of Indian products in partner countries to meet the information gap, which is often a major constraint in developing markets in developing countries. In the case of Africa, in addition to such expositions, there are now regular India-Africa trade and investment Conclaves, bringing potential buyers and sellers as well as investment partners together. In recent years, promoting Indian investment in other developing countries has become a major component of South-South cooperation.

The Government of India, in encouraging such investment, counsels sensitivity to local culture and environmental concerns. Such ventures should bring demonstrable development benefits to the partner country in terms of employment generation, skills development and trade generation. This is particularly true of African countries. In 2008, India announced the Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme for the 49 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) identified by the UN. The DFTP Scheme granted duty free access on 94% of India’s total tariff lines, to be implemented over a period of five years. The scheme was intended to provide preferential market access on tariff lines comprising 92.5% of global exports of all LDCs.

4. India-Africa Development Partnership

India’s relations with the African continent go back a very long period in our history, but it is our common struggle against colonialism and apartheid that a more contemporary partnership took shape. Since the inception of India’s ITEC Programme and its ICCR Scholarship Programme in the 1960’s, Africa has emerged as one of the India’s most important development partners. In the past 10 years, such partnership has significantly expanded in virtually every category. This intensification has been reflected in the holding of the India-Africa Business Conclave annually since 2005. In the 6th such conclave held in 2011, some 800 delegates from 35 African countries attended, including several heads of state/governments, senior officials and business leaders, who spent 3 days interacting with their Indian counterparts.

It may be noted that India-Africa trade expanded from $20 billion in 2005-06 to $68 billion in 2011-12 and is targeted to reach $90 billion by 2015. India’s development cooperation with Africa was significantly expanded in 2005, when India became a full member of the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and was granted observer status in Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). A special outreach to Francophone Africa was launched through the Team 9 initiative, with a view to promoting India’s economic engagement with eight French speaking countries. A sum of $1 million was extended to ACBF towards its programs for capacity building sustainable development and poverty alleviation. To support the Team 9 initiative a line of
credit of $500 million was announced, along with a $200 million credit line to The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). At the initiative of the then President of India, Dr. Kalam, India announced the very ambitious Pan-African E-Network project which would provide digital connectivity across Africa and also link Indian educational and medical institutions with counterpart institutions in Africa. The project cost is $125 million.

In recognition of the growing importance of India-Africa ties and prospects for much closer development cooperation, it was decided to convene regular India-Africa Forum Summits and the first such Summit was held in April 2008 in New Delhi, the second in May 2011 in Addis Ababa. These Summits have "laid the foundation of a new architecture for a structured interaction and cooperation between India and our African partners in the 21st Century. A number of specific actions were also spelt out to encourage ICT collaboration, including the quick and effective implementation of the flagship Pan-African E-Network project which India has contributed, towards overcoming the digital divide in Africa. A very broad-ranging collaborative effort is envisaged under the rubric "Cooperation in Social Development and Capacity Building". These are:

- Education
- Health
- Water and Sanitation
- Culture and Sports; and
- Poverty Eradication

The other broad areas of cooperation identified are Tourism, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment and finally, Media and Communication. This Framework for Cooperation is a unique initiative in the history of South-South Cooperation, placing development cooperation within a much broader context of overall relations between India and African countries. India-Africa development cooperation is conceived in a unique three-tiered pattern, encompassing bilateral, regional and pan-African cooperation. As a follow up to the first Forum Summit, an India-Africa Ministerial meeting was held in New Delhi in March 2010. A 15-member African Union delegation met together with a 42-member Indian delegation representing different Ministries, agencies and industry bodies, to chalk out an Action Plan to implement some of the key decisions of the Summit and also to set a road map for the Second Summit scheduled in 2012. Among the specific projects agreed upon to be financed by credits from India were:

- Setting up of Human Settlement Institutes in 5 African countries.
- Establishment of Vocational Training Institutes in 10 African countries.
- Indian assistance for a Pan-African Stock Exchange.
- A $300 million credit line would be made available for financing an infrastructure project under regional integration.
- Strengthening capacity of the African Court on Human and People’s Rights.

The Second Summit in Addis Ababa in May 2011 expressed satisfaction over the progress made in implementing the Framework of Cooperation adopted in the first Summit and adopted a follow-up Framework for Enhanced Cooperation. This document agreed to continue and expand cooperation in the various areas identified at the first Summit, while identifying a few new initiatives to be pursued. In the Second Summit, India offered $5 billion for the next three years under lines of credit to help Africa achieve its development goals. An additional $700 million was offered to establish new institutions and training programs in consultation with the African Union and its institutions. Further, as a follow-up step to the successful Pan-African E-Network Project, it was proposed that an India-Africa Virtual University would be established. It may be noted that in order to ensure early implementation of recommendations emanating from these summits, several conferences and workshops have been organized in the period September 2011 to March 2012. These conferences/workshops have come up with a number of specific projects for the participating governments to consider for implementation. Among the meetings convened so far are:

- India-Africa Business Partnership Summit (October 2011)
- India-Africa Workshop on Traditional Medicines (October 2011)
- India-Africa Conference on Indian Lines of Credit (November 2011)
- India-Africa Strategic Dialogue (November 2011)
- 3rd India-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference (December 2011)
- Crafts Skill Development Workshop for Women (January 2012)
- Special Session on Global Commons & Challenges (February 2012)
- Science & Technology Ministers’ Conference (March 2012)
- Training programme for Secretary Generals of African Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
A. ITEC
India’s support to African countries through ITEC training slots may be seen in Figure 1. However, ITEC covers only part of a much larger range of civilian training courses made available to African countries both under bilateral as well as multilateral schemes.

![Figure 1: Utilization of ITEC programme](image)

Source: Ministry of External Affairs (India)

B. Scholarships and Fellowships
India also offers a number of scholarships and fellowships to students from Africa. The figures for the past 4 years may be seen in the Table 2. These scholars and fellowships include travel expenses.

I. Indian Council of Cultural Research (ICCR) scholarships at Indian Universities:
As per Table 2, there are scholarships being given including airfare to foreign students since 2009. In 2012-13, 900 seats are being allocated and the utilization of these are underway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Seats Allocated</th>
<th>Seats Utilized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Admission process is underway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of External Affairs (India)

II. Special agricultural scholarships (75 per year): 71 and 85 utilized in 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively. 102 applications under process for 2012-13.

III. C.V. Raman Scientific Fellowships (104 per year): 85 and 79 utilized in 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively.

IV. Special training courses (500 per year): 449 and 929 utilized in 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively.

C. Capacity Building Institutions
As per decisions taken at the India-Africa Forum Summits, India has committed to establishing about 100 capacity-building institutions to build and strengthen capacities at the pan-African, regional and bilateral levels. Some of the key institutions in the process of implementation are listed below:
- India-Africa Institute of Information Technology, Ghana
- India-Africa Institute of Foreign Trade, Ghana, Uganda
- India-Africa Institute of Education Planning and Administration, Burundi
• India-Africa Diamond Institute, Botswana
• India-Africa Civil Aviation Academy (location to be decided)
• India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development (location to be decided)
• India-Africa University for Life and Earth Sciences – Ibadan University, Nigeria

Another major contribution to capacity building in Africa is India’s commitment to set up 10 vocational training centres in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Libya, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. An Apex Planning Organization for Coal is being established in Mozambique, which will also providing training in mining technology. Another unique area of cooperation between India and Africa relates to the setting up of Human Settlement Institutes in Kenya, Mauritania, Togo and Zambia to deal in a multi-disciplinary manner with the challenge of rapid urbanization. India has also launched an initiative of establishing and strengthening common infrastructure and facilities for pan-African development of some key industry sectors. Examples are:
• India-Africa Food Processing Cluster
• India-Africa Textile Cluster
The location of these clusters is under discussion.

D. Lines of Credit
• Lines of Credit (LoCs) have been an increasingly significant part of India-Africa development cooperation since 2003-04.
• They are concessional loans intended to set up infrastructure projects and to share Indian experience in developmental initiatives.
• LoCs have financed a wide range of projects in agriculture, irrigation, food processing, rural electrification, IT and infrastructure such as roads, railways, cement and power.
• The objective is to create durable assets and build sustainable Institutions.

As per table 3, there have been constant credit approvals since 2002 and $2140.64 million were disbursed in 2012.

Table 2: Year-wise Approvals and Disbursements of Credit to Africa
(As on March 23, 2012) USD Million

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Disbursed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>99.87</td>
<td>49.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>1052.60</td>
<td>97.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>141.50</td>
<td>234.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>524.50</td>
<td>338.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>470.10</td>
<td>288.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>486.50</td>
<td>352.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>1055.07</td>
<td>398.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>1189.41</td>
<td>380.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>5129.55</td>
<td>2140.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of External Affairs (India)

5. Cases:

A. Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT:
Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT, Ghana’s first Advanced Information Technology Institute works to stimulate growth of ICT Sector in ECOWAS. Established in 2003 through a partnership between the Govt. of Ghana and Govt. of India, the State of the art facility provides a dynamic environment for innovation, teaching and learning as well as practical research.

B. Pan-Africa e-Network Project
The Pan-Africa e-Network is one of the best examples of the growing partnership between India and Africa. It began as a visionary initiative of the former President of India, Dr. Kalam. It is one of the most ambitious projects for distance education and tele-medicine undertaken in Africa. In addition, the network is also equipped to support e-governance, e-commerce, and infotainment, resource mapping metrological and other services in African
countries. A total of 47 African countries have joined the project in two phases. The first phase was inaugurated in February 2009, with 11 African countries signing up. The second phase was launched in August 2010. The objective of tele-education is to impart quality education to 10,000 students in Africa over a 5-year period in various disciplines. Some of the best educational institutions are participating. Currently 2000 African students are already enrolled in several distance education programs. In tele-medicine, on-line medical consultation with Indian medical specialists is now available to African medical practitioners at the Patient End Location in Africa. The project cost is $125 million.

6. Findings:

First, there is a critical need for mentoring and training programs that transfer knowledge from the current generation of teachers, professors, and school leaders to the next. There is also a need to identify possible future leaders at an early stage and to grow them into the next generation of academic leaders. Using local challenges to define the curriculum and content of education programs is also another area needing attention. Coming up with solutions for mobile learning systems and faculty is one innovation that can break open the challenge of limited capacity and small numbers of high-quality faculty.

Revitalizing the education sector also needs to transform universities into centres for leadership development, research, and innovation. This requires unique models for capacity development of tertiary institutions that generate individual capacity in terms of skills, knowledge, and competences. Attention needs to go to the institutional level as well, to develop faculty, library facilities, lecture room facilities, modern teaching aids (e-learning, distance learning, group learning), ICT innovations (video conferencing facilities) and laboratories. Organizational capacity is also needed to help universities develop the leadership they need to manage in a modern era, build skills in networking across professional groups, and build partnerships with the private sector and civil society. Such partnerships could help tackle the problem of unemployment that is so critical for Africa’s development.

Doing research for pay to support universities are also models in use that provide incentives to faculty to earn more but keep them with a minimum teaching load and stringent research and publication requirements to ensure quality staff and faculty. With such innovations there is a good chance that Africa can use the education system to leapfrog the development process. This would require commitment by government to support universities and for leaders of education establishments to find effective ways to work with the private sector. Today’s educators need to embrace change, drive for discovery, be aware of opportunities and drive hard bargains. Strategic partnerships are also needed across countries to save on infrastructure and expensive retooling. There are also numerous opportunities to tap into the diaspora, many of whom are willing to give back to Africa for free.

Countries need to think of four areas of capacity for universities and systems of higher education. Ensuring education institutions have the requisite transformative capacity because they can generate people with the skills, competences, and motivation for transforming their societies. That curriculum and engagements with education materials and pedagogical tools highlight and focus on real skills to get things done that are so needed for implementation capacity. Classroom exercises, internship activities, and reading materials need to focus on not only theory but also practical approaches and examples that challenge learners to try things out on their own. Challenging learners to be original and to experiment would also be key to build the innovative capacity so needed to leapfrog development. Having education centres partner with communities and the private sector to bridge the world of learning and doing could bring in the needed change.

7. Suggestions:

1. Funding academic capacity is crucial for ensuring a viable and competitive education sector. The critical areas for financing include developing faculty to increase the number of lecturers and re-tool existing faculty equipping them with skills to handle current and emerging issues. Financing to facilitate participation of students is also important as is support for infrastructure improvements such as refurbishing and stocking libraries with both physical and digital material and refurbishing lecture rooms.

2. Policy reforms are needed to align education policy to national development priorities. Curriculum currently followed by many countries on the African continent are not addressing the exact needs of today’s labour market. Entrepreneurial education is necessary to produce job creators more than job seekers. Education policy reform also involves addressing the role the education sector can play at the forefront of societal transformation—civic
awareness and citizen development are frequently referred to as the main subjects for influence through education policy.

3. **Enhancing research capacity** in institutions of higher learning is becoming increasingly needed so that they can adequately play their role as incubators of knowledge and ideas. Making education institutions the center for innovation and generation of ideas is critical for development.

8. **Conclusion**

Capacity in the education sector is vital for supporting effective and sustainable development. Challenges facing the education system in Africa call for creative solutions and a new leadership. Educators need to be conversant with complex adaptive systems thinking and be able to make effective decisions under different strategic and risk scenarios.

Capacity in the education sector is vital for supporting effective and sustainable development. Challenges facing the education system in Africa call for creative solutions and a new leadership. Educators need to be conversant with complex adaptive systems thinking and be able to make effective decisions under different strategic and risk scenarios. Africa needs to reposition universities to become the centres for new ideas that support its development. African universities are uniquely placed to tackle these challenges if they can improve on the approach they take to a knowledge society, their relationships with the private sector, their ability to tap into opportunities offered by new pedagogical and communication tools, and their boldness in bringing the needed change. Attention needs to go beyond basic skills and tackle the difficult areas of innovation-versus-implementation.

The African Capacity Building Foundation has experimented over the years with different approaches for building capacity including on the role of universities to change society and transform economies. The new strategy for the Foundation covering the period 2012-2016 focuses on experimentation and learning with attention to partnerships for scaling up results that sees universities as critical loci for change.

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