Cross-Border Higher Education in Africa: The Kenyan Experience

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Abstract
Cross border higher education can be seen as one of the ways a country responds to the impact of globalization, yet at the same time respects the individuality of the nation. Internationalization of higher education as the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service function of higher education. Cross border university education is a step in developing aligning education to international standards and being responsive to global environment. Among the benefits of cross border higher education are international security, maintenance of economic competitiveness, fostering human understanding across nations, flow of technology, promotion of knowledge based economy and establishing of regional networks to compete with other regions of the world. Given the limited resources it is imperative that universities appreciate the potential for regional development in establishing regional partnerships. This paper will trace patterns and trends of cross border provision of higher education in the East Africa region, examine the relevant policy environment and make a critical analysis of potential benefits and challenges associated with this growing phenomenon in the higher education sub-sector. Discussions in this paper shall be limited university education drawing insights from secondary literature and reports from relevant bodies and ministries and institutions especially from Kenya. In view of this empirical studies are recommended. Addressing Social economic problems of Africa requires a regional approach by Africans with the context in mind. However, important lessons from other parts of the world are drawn. Studies on regional partnerships in other fields are common with very few focusing on cross border higher education as catalyst for regional development, an agenda this paper proposes.
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Keywords: cross border, higher, education, university, international.
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INTRODUCTION
Higher education has become more international in the last twenty years by having more students choosing to study abroad, enroll in foreign educational programs and institutions in their home country or simply using internet to take courses at colleges or universities in other countries. This can also be referred to as cross-border university education. The growth in cross-border education is a result of different forces among them; a desire to promote mutual understanding, the migration of skilled workers in globalised economy, desire of institutions to earn additional incomes or the need to build a more educated workforce in the home countries especially for emerging economies. Cross-border education has developed differently across countries and regions. Student mobility has been policy-driven in Europe and demand-driven in the Asia-Pacific region, while North America has mostly been a magnet for foreign students. Unless African countries invest more in higher education in terms of physical infrastructure, programmes, governance and research, the mentality that "quality international education cannot be obtained in Africa" will continue to deplete the cream of the faculty, students, and graduates in the predominant South-North trek of best brains. This paper will focus on the unilateral relations that have characterized cross-border education between most African countries and the developed nations, analyze policy environment, potential challenges and the accompanying benefits in Kenya.

Cross-border education can be seen as opening the education system in such a way that its inputs and outputs are not restricted to national boundaries. The future of higher education cannot be addressed without taking stock of national, regional and international context in which it is called upon to fulfill its mandate be it traditional or novel. Research and training henceforth cannot be conducted in purely local terms. Cross-border education encompasses a wide range of activities that are part of the wider international academic linkages, agreements, international development projects/aid and international commercial initiatives. Although cross-border education is not seen in terms of commercial enterprises, the exchange of students or faculty has some export value in a country's balance of payment ranging from accommodation, living, and travel expenses as observed by Knight (2004). This paper is based on extensive review of secondary literature and authors' experiences in the higher education sector in Kenya.

Development of Cross Border Higher Education in Africa

Cross-border higher education started long before the colonial scramble for Africa. Internationalization at the time was confined to the physical mobility of scholars and students crossing regions and borders for higher learning. Institutions such as Karawiyyinn in Fez in Morocco in 859AD, Al-Azhar in Cairo Egypt in 970 AD are among the oldest operating universities in the world (Arab Information Centre 1966: 282 cited in Assie-Lumumba, 2006). Per-ankh (House of life) located within the Egyptian temples took the form of huge campuses with many buildings, and thousands of employees dating back to 2000 BC. Maggut (2012) observed that intellectual capacity of Africa as exemplified by the ancient Egyptian education system played a seminal role in shaping pedagogical approaches in Europe and other parts of the world. The university of Timbuktu is another example of pioneering African genius which served as a hub of scholarly activities as early as by 12th century. Many scholars traveled from Europe, Asia and the rest of Africa to these centers of knowledge. This is a clear evidence that Africa has potential to participate and make contributions that can help in addressing critical challenges facing the world to day. At the onset of colonialism, whatever forms of learning that existed on the continent were destroyed and replaced with new educational policies and practices modeled according to the interests of colonizing European countries.

This trend persists in many African countries where cross-border education is dominated by the traditional North-South divide. In this situation very limited programmes focus on enhancing regional cooperation capacity building and student exchange at regional level (Sorensen, 2009). Malumba, Abdulkarim, Kagiso, and Rohen, (2008), observed that new patterns are emerging; West African students mainly migrate to Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Senegal, in East Africa students migrate to Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania while in Southern Africa their main destination is South Africa. This can be attributed to the escalating cost of higher education in Europe and US and the recognition of programmes offered in host institutions. Such relations have also been strengthened by sharing of common language, closer trade links and political stability.

For many decades the East African region has constituted a dynamic cross-border education zone. Despite the political turbulence of the last 20 years, cross-border education has flourished alongside the ever increasing demand for higher education. Cross-border higher education has proved resilient and resourceful in adapting to a host of political challenges including changing of regimes which necessitate border security management. Kenya has a significant number of students from neighboring countries especially refugees from Somali, Rwanda, and Southern Sudan and the Democratic republic of Congo. The key challenge in the region is to find ways to attain safe and secure borders that will also contribute to sustaining and enhancing the valuable benefits of cross-border education in the region as a way of responding to forces of globalization and exploiting the opportunities for regional linkages among African countries.

Cross-border higher education is seen as one of the ways a country responds to the impact of globalization yet at the same time respect the individuality of the nations. It has economic implications but also internationalization of human ideas. Cross-border higher education stimulates a context in which higher education must perform its different functions and ensure its own transformation. In Kenya universities are trying to actualize this by sending students abroad, exporting programs, establishment of campuses and institutes that attract international students, facilitation and participation in international research projects.

Both university and state benefit from the development and provision of cross-borders education mainly as a host of international students. Africa continues to be vulnerable to global system and is caught up in the cycle of dependence and external control. This situation is attributed to the colonial legacy where the seed of the South-North flow of international students was sown. However, long after colonial era higher education in African has not sobered up to reinvent itself in areas of teaching and learning, research and service to community. Institutions need to clearly articulate their purpose for a deeper understanding of their motivations to internationalize and cater for multicultural clientele from different parts of the country and the international community. Research must be shaped to reflect both local and international dimensions aimed at solving critical issues that have persistently antagonized the African countries while contributing to development of the international community. Service to community must characterize the daily operations of these institutions to remain relevant in the light of social, economic, political and technological development needs of the local and international society. This notwithstanding, universities in Africa have remained ivory towers with limited touch of the societies they purport to serve. They need to raise and actualize their knowledge transmission, dissemination and research initiatives culminating into visible projects in leading innovations to power the national economies.

Universities serve as the fuel for innovation, entrepreneurship and regional synergy. They become promoters of economic development and places of technology generation. Rosan (2002, cited in

Whitaker, 2004) reiterated that countries and institutions need to embark on series of short and longterm strategic plans, implement and continuously evaluate them to ensure they suit the dynamic needs of modern society. Students from Sub-Saharan Africa are the most mobile in the world with one in 16 studying abroad. On the contrary only one in 250 North American students (0.4%) study abroad, yet USA takes the largest share of international students. Mulumba, Abdulkarim, Kagiso and Roshen (2008) observed that Africa is completely vulnerable to sophisticated recruitment strategies by industrialized countries. Third world countries become a cheap source of skilled labour in the world search for knowledge workers and they continue to be disadvantaged as the exodus of students and qualified human resource continue unabated mainly because of limited access to domestic institutions.

Although the overall benefits are expected to be positive, the net benefits of globalisation will not necessarily be global but are likely to accrue to countries and regions that will place themselves strategically. Knight (2004) viewed globalisation as a concept that engenders a strong reaction both supportive and critical of its process and impact. It is described as flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and ideas across borders. To share the benefits of globalisation institutions of higher education in Africa must gear up to compete for quality international students, and faculty to avert the impending marginalisation in the process of globalisation where developed countries stand the advantage of absorbing the best international students. Maggut (2012) noted that the income raised through student visa application and tuition plays a key role in the British economy, accounting for upwards of six billion sterling pounds annually, and generating thousands of jobs. Africa must invest in world-class higher educational institutions that will compete favaourably with other institutions globally, especially in research. This move supported by favourable cross border policies will attract local and international students as well as educators, promote the growth of education trade with the associated benefits of human resource development and creation of employment in the continent. This article is based on the premise that regional capacity building in relation to teaching, research and service to the community is fundamental for fueling the knowledge based economy demanded by the region so as to respond to global market trends.

Cross-Border Higher Education in Kenyan Context
Higher education sector in Kenya has been experiencing a number of challenges including inadequate funding, low institutional capacities, and ever increasing demand for higher education, poor management practices, brain drain, quality issues and competition from other providers. According to the Republic of Kenya (2005) the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology realized the need of comprehensive review and reform strategy to redefine the roles of public and private sectors in development of education and training. The sector suffered from lack of co-ordination of the many progarammes offered by various institutions and providers, inadequate and obsolete equipments, a mismatch of skills taught and the market demands, limited access to limited facilities and high cost of education and training, inadequate funding for research, lack of a unified accreditation system and harmonized legal frameworks. The Ministry adopted a Sector Wide Approach to Programme Planning (SWAP) in which all stakeholders are engaged in designing objectives, harmonization of procedures and approaches in order to attain ownership and develop a coherent financing arrangement. The government hoped to expand the public universities and increase their capacity, proportion of students studying science related courses to 50%, with at least one third of these being women by the year 2010. Hence the government undertook to address these weaknesses.

Kenya has a long history of internationalization of higher education dating back to before independence. The pioneer group left the country for America and the former USSR. This was mainly due to scarcity of skilled human resource the country needed at independence. Among other African countries Kenya aligned herself to expand higher education for the citizens to meet the human resource needs especially to domesticate administrative positions previously occupied by foreigners. Since then Kenyans have continuously been seeking opportunities for higher education abroad (Tom Mboya, cited in Jowi, Crispus and David, 2008).

Many Sub-Saharan African countries had many more students studying abroad than at home, Kenya had the highest number of students in US followed by Nigeria (Mulumba, Abdulkarim, Kagiso and Roshen, 2008). Destinations for Kenyan international students varied; USA 7,381, UK 3,083, Australia 115, Canada 341, India 5 21 other countries 1,707 and a total of 14,128 second to Nigeria with 15,138. However, due to increasing cost of international education in Europe and USA, the trend later changed. Due to their poor background most Kenyan students who cannot afford the cost of higher education at home are seeking alternative destinations like South Africa, Far East and even Uganda. Apart from family initiatives most of the international students were supported through fundraising by local communities and scholarships. According to CHE (2008) Kenya was spending $253, 884, 058 on students abroad; this prompted the government to consider the introduction of the self privately sponsored programmes both at

undergraduate and postgraduate in public universities. To meet the growing need in face of limited resources, University of Nairobi established the Department of Extra-mural studies while Kenyatta University established the Institute of Open and Distant Learning ODEL an e-learning platform. However, the uptake of e-learning courses has been low among Kenyans and other developing countries because many students still believe in the face-to-face mode of delivery in addition to inadequate internet infrastructural facilities and personnel.

Kenyatta University alone has several constituent colleges and linkages. In the spirit of internationalization of higher education, The Kenyatta University center for international programmes and collaboration was established in 1994 with the main objectives as: to facilitate linkages and partnerships with other educational institutions and organizations locally and internationally; to promote international students and staff exchange, joint research, teaching, capacity building, conferences and workshops. Consequently Kenyatta University has many partnerships and linkages within and outside the country for instance in Africa Da re Salaam, Amoud University and Ministry of Education Somalia Punt Land and Obafemi Awolowo of Nigeria. Kenyatta University has International linkages with universities such as Alberta University in Canada, Bareauth University in Germany and Capital Normal University in Beijing China and Cultin University of Technology in Australia to mention a few (see www.ku.ac.ke). The university is enjoying some of the benefits of internationalisation in form of staff development, joint development of curriculum, and securing resources for infrastructural development.

Today the university boasts of being a world class university with a post modern library of its kind in the South of Saharan region. The university has a share of its own challenges including higher lecturer student ratios. It is evident that out of the numerous partnerships and linkages very few were between KU and other African countries. Furthermore there was no proper documentation of the statistics on these engagement making it difficult to make valid conclusions on such matters. In many instances co-operation with institutions from other countries is often viewed as more beneficial than with institutions within the country perhaps because it leads to development of new curriculum, comparison and market orientation.

In the 1990s, increasing demand for higher education asserted itself as one key feature in Kenya. In addition to the influence of liberalization foreign institutions of higher education begun to settle in the country to provide educational services. Some of these higher educational providers are the Kenya College of Accountancy, African Virtual University, Australian Study Institute, Perth Institute of Business and Technology, the British Council and the United State International University to mention a few. At the same time, students who could afford higher education abroad crossed borders mainly to the Western industrialized countries without restrictions.

Among the private universities United State International University (USIU) is the most internationalized largely with students from about 45 countries. Jowi, Crispus and David, (2008), observed that USIU had an average of 347, University of Nairobi 54, Moi University 52, Egerton University 40, and Kenyatta University with 37 international students. However, most international students from Northern countries do not take full courses and are mainly involved in short courses and research projects.

Attracting international staff has been more difficult to accomplish especially from Europe and America because they are expensive to sustain for most Kenyan institutions. Also interchange of staff in the East African region has not also picked due to the fact that most institutions have not achieved the desired staffing levels. Jowi, Crispus and David, (2008), *observed that a few opportunities exist for sabbaticals but they are not maximally utilized due to inadequate expertise at home to stand for departing ones. The problem is exacerbated by the low staff salaries that do not allow faculty to go to countries with high cost of living.*

Institutions in Kenya have also entered into co-operations and collaborations in research and exchange programmes for staff and students. Koech and Opakas (1999 cited in, Jowi, Crispus and David, 2008) observed that Kenyan institutions have a strong international dimension in this area. University of Nairobi had the highest number of Agreements and collaborations 67, Egerton University 60, Moi University 54, and Kenyatta University 52 and USIU 33 the highest among private universities. Apparently institutions in Kenya have limited collaborations with African countries with the exception of South Africa as compared to USA and UK but Japan and India are also coming up as players in international research collaborations and networks. According to Michaela (2007), this process of incorporating new suppliers of higher education has brought about many public and private universities both local and foreign. While this eases the long standing problem of access to higher education, it raises concern about how to legislate and ensure quality supply within such heterogeneous system. It is against this background that CHE has constantly been providing information on the status of both public and private universities in Kenya with regard to their accreditation and warning the public

about some dubious organization claiming to offer diplomas and degrees.

The quality assurance model used by CHE emphasizes on institutional capacity in consideration of programmes, resources, governance and academic programmes. The Commission has therefore set standards as guidelines for development and management but the institutions have the liberty to use what is workable for them.

Effective internationalization is considered to include intercultural learning, creating classrooms where true intercultural learning can take place by integrating the cultural inputs of students from different backgrounds as a source of learning and make them view themselves as resources. The focus is to infuse an international dimension into the course content, programmes and campus climate. There must be significant role of government in internationalization of education involving dialogue with other governments in support of development of more markets, scholarships and generic promotions of countries as destinations, reasonable cost and time for visa processing for international students and creation of living and working environment for cross border students. With globalization, universities are now exposed to stronger competition within regions and globally hence a firm commitment to quality assurance will be a necessary requirement. However, weaker developing institutions are likely to become less attractive when established institutions are looking for partners Sorensen (2009).

Benefits of Cross Border Higher Education
Regional collaboration in education provides support to individual institutions as well as the involved countries. The cooperating institutions, students and teaching staff share variety of benefits including maintenance of economic competitiveness and fostering human understanding across borders. This also comes as indirect investment in future economy, the labour market, and a boost to national educational demand to attain an international dimension of research and teaching, as well as institutions building on quality improvement. As the need for collaboration extend across borders, countries within the same geopolitical spheres, create regional networks that give them strength to compete with other regions of the world.

Cross-border higher education is a means for universities to show case of the African knowledge. Michael (1989) challenged African researchers to use indigenous resources and the hitherto untapped reserves of popular knowledge in order to identify, understand and act upon local development needs and avoid exploitative relations where such institutions are used as the launch pad for Western universities in the African region.

Higher education and skills create the base of knowledge, self reliance for Africa's future generations and the foundation from which ordinary Africans can set off in their career. Importantly, African leaders are challenged to ensure that countries in Africa are able to present our educated compatriots with competitive opportunities domestically, once they are qualified. Preserve their expertise to ensure the critical mass on the continent that will help to regenerate local knowledge and repackage it for the regional and international development (Ntuli, 2010).

On the same note Ogot (2004), cautioned that in the accelerated pace of scientific and technological development and the ICT revolution it was not clear what contributions Africa will make. Regrettably many African learners are not grounded in societal safeguards of a solid culture compared to other regions of the world that have successfully traveled the road to development like Japan and China with the culture at the center which gives them clear work ethics, conscious of their responsibilities towards themselves, others and posterity. Today African countries continue to perpetuate the colonial modeled education system with graduates as alienated lots majority of who disregard African culture and wish they would one day get a chance to be citizens of Western developed nations.

Internationalization is a deliberate strategy designed to give universities an international dimension. It is the sum total of pro-active institutional measures to enhance and facilitate the complex processes that create a community that prepares students to function in a globalized working and living environment Ogot (2003). Mwinzi (2010) defined internationalization as a response to globalization in the education sector. At the continent level it involves harnessing local human resource to understand the local environment, and put it to use in production of goods and services that helps to address local challenges as well as selling out to the rest of the world. The rationale is to facilitate Africans contribution to the global development from the platform of identifying their strengths and weaknesses, determine what unique contributions they can package and brand for the world market. Ultimately the process should reflect the African history, culture, traditions, economic and academic needs as well as aspirations. This is opposed to the trend where African countries are engaged in chasing Western type of development, sometimes without consideration of their local contexts.

Cross-border provision transcends focus on production for subsistence and development of manpower for respective countries to the development of human resource capacity that meets international standards. African regional bodies,

countries and institutions are now challenged to provide researchers who can train the next generation of researchers who meet international standards and also participate and contribute to local regional and international development projects. Formal education should be tailored to encompass African communities' philosophy of life. Basic to all would be the inculcation of broad-based virtues like appreciation of existing different cultures, respect for persons private property and cherishing of extended family, humility and empathizing with one another in abundance or scarcity as the basic framework of the African identity. Furthermore non-Africans who come to African universities should be exposed to such values. The question is; why does it seem easy for African youth to ape Western mannerisms? Is it not possible for non-Africans to be exposed to some significant African ethics?

Cross-border higher education provide opportunities for knowledge and technology acceleration including the promise to penetrate new markets, but also increases competition for scarce resources such as human capital, research infrastructure and foreign investment. Cross-border higher education provides a chance for institutions and countries to present themselves in the world scene. However, Michaela (2007) argues that some will serve as suppliers of education service and share the accruing benefits based on their capacity in key aspects or as hosts of foreign institutions. In this case the role of the state becomes imperative in providing the necessary structures and procedures that speed up and suppress restrictions for international bonds to be strengthened.

Internationalisation is associated with new approaches to education including advancement in technology that comes with possibilities of of Virtual universities that are not constrained by physical facilities, space and cost. However, with virtual communication promising to be an avenue for brain circulation the secret is in how proactive countries become in imparting skills and expertise and to establish supportive infrastructure for the knowledge based economy to operate in competitive environment. This calls for planning at the national level to provide the infrastructural facilities such as electricity and internet access to diverse regions at affordable rates and at the institutional level to devolve services to marginalized regions. For instance the African Virtual University founded by the World Bank operates learning centers at Kenyatta University, Maseno, Egerton and Moi universities in Kenya with 26 established sites in Africa collaborating in research and teaching with universities and training institutions in USA and Canada through satellite and internet technologies.

Cross-Border education comes in handy in the fight against poverty and underdevelopment in Africa. However, Sorensen (2009) identified three main challenges to internationalisation of higher education and establishment of cooperation in Africa as; lack of financial facilities, dependence on Northern support and marginalisation of weak institutions of higher education. There is urgent need for African institutions to develop capacity and systems for research as part of the search for solutions to local and regional challenges. A survey by Association of African Universities established that research funding was inadequate, research findings were not systematically published in scientific journals while in-house publishing facilities were too slow or not well managed.

Risks Involved in Cross-Border Education

There is a general agreement that cross-border higher education offer both local and international students a choice of high quality courses. However, Ogot (2003) noted that deep inequalities mark the internationalization of higher education where a few countries dominate the global scientific systems and those new technologies are owned primarily by multinational academic institutions from major Western industrialized countries making African countries dependent on major academic super powers.

Without accreditation and assessment mechanisms programs and institutional mobility carry quality risks such as buying and selling of fake degrees which elicit a negative perception of cross-border higher education. This possibility of "fraud" in granting of unrecognized degrees or the easy abstention of degrees. It is against such circumstances that Kenyatta University virtual campus introduced courses both online and compulsory attendance mode for distance learners. Risk of misinformation, low quality provision and questionable qualifications by cross-border education providers is high when dealing with commercial provision and non-traditional modes.

Student mobility and foreign education could lead to displacement of domestic students by international students if it is not carefully monitored by governments and educational institutions according to OECD (2004). More so, most students seeking cross-border education are self sponsored implying that students from lower economic backgrounds participate less in cross-border student mobility. Consequently cross-border education is no longer accessible to the economically disadvantaged and has remained the privilege of those who can afford. Many of the developing countries have also been caught up in the mix trying to align themselves to expand higher education for their citizens amidst resource

constraints a situation that has created confusion for many institutions .

Sorensen (2009) proposed establishment of a university consortium that will help in applying for various types of funding from developed countries, lobbying donors and decision makers for provision of seed grant for collaborative research projects, review of funding practices to enhance student exchange and capacity building in concrete areas such as proposal writing, approaches and principles of cooperation and removing structural barriers to internationalisation. OECD (2004) proposed mechanism to bridge equity in access to cross-border higher education in receiving and sending countries to: improve financial support for participating students through grants and loan schemes; provision of information on the benefits and costs of cross-border education.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of cross-border higher education dates back to the pre-colonial era where Africa received a significant share of international scholars seeking opportunities in renown centers of knowledge, colonial era saw a reverse of this trend introducing the South-North exodus of students and highly skilled personnel. Strategic approach is paramount to success and sustainability of the benefits accruing from cross-border higher education. Countries and institutions in their quest to internationalise need to establish networks, mobilize resources, foster capacity building and strengthen joint research programmes with local and developed countries and campaign for policies and initiatives of countries and individual academic institutions or systems to deal with global trends such as policies relating to recruitment of foreign students, collaboration with other academic institutions or establishing branches in other countries. Investment in Information Technology is vital to regional partnerships, search and documentation of indigenous knowledge for exchange in the process of internationalization. While cross-border education poses critical challenges for Africa, opportunities are also numerous not forgetting the ethnic diversity with mixed talents, artifacts and physical resources some of which are largely unexploited.

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