

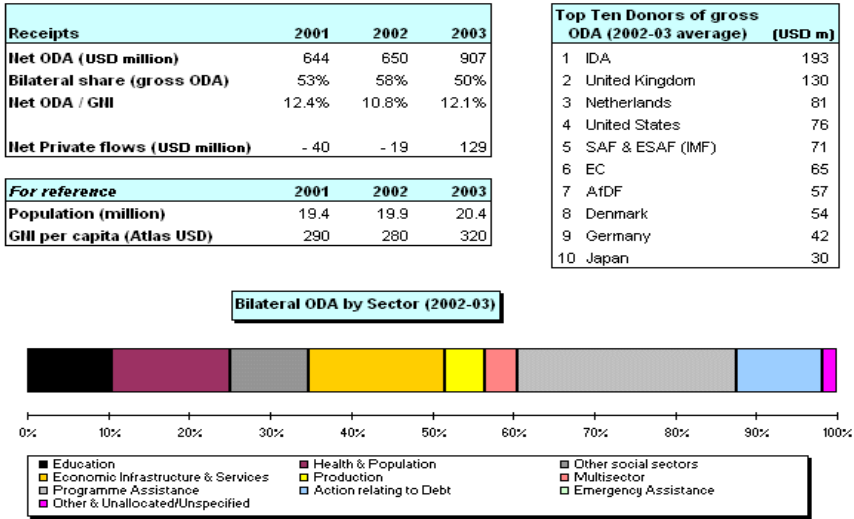
The University of Ghana: Strategic Institutional Development in the South

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The Development Policy of Ghana

Ghana’s stated development goals are to accelerate economic growth, improve the quality of life for all Ghanaians, and reduce poverty through macroeconomic stability, higher private investment, broad-based social and rural development, as well as direct poverty-alleviation efforts. The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) was initiated in 1995/96 and updated in 2000-2001 (OECD/DAC 2001). The objectives of the GPRS include: (a) reducing the incidence and depth of both rural and urban poverty, mainly through the acceleration of pro-poor growth, (b) improving the income earning capabilities and opportunities for the poor and vulnerable, (c) minimizing gender and geographical disparities, (d) facilitating a healthier, better educated and more productive population. The GPRS is financed by both domestic and external resources. Official Development Assistance (ODA) brings a significant contribution to human development in Ghana. Fig 1. presents a summary of ODA for the period 2001 - 2003 which averaged well over US\$ 700 million. In 2005, ODA to Ghana was about US\$ 630 million i.e., 35% of the total national budget (GoG, 2005). It also represents development partners’ recognition of Ghana’s commitment to consolidate good governance, fight poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Figure 1. Summary of Overseas Development Assistance to Ghana 2001-2003

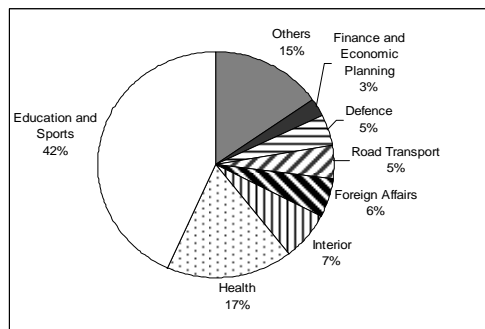


Sources: OECD, World Bank.

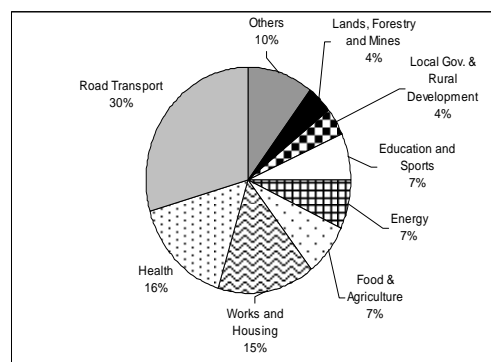
Science and technology are increasingly recognised (e.g., Matos & Gordon, 2004) to be central to both the origins of the UN Secretary General Annan's three challenges – freedom from want, from fear and of future generations to sustain their lives on this planet - and to the prospects for successfully dealing with them (Clark, 2003; UNESCO, 2003; van Ginkel, 2005). Two main points arise from the path taken by the Government of Ghana in the delivery of national development; (i) education must play a significant role, especially in the area of Science and Technology and (ii) the degree of implementation of programmes is dependent to a high degree in some sectors, on donor funding and by default the political realities that exist in donor countries. Figure 2 a & b show that, the Education and Sports sector received the largest budgetary allocation in 2005 (i.e., 31.35% of the total national budget) including other sources such as the Ghana Education Trust Fund and Internally Generated Funds. Education & Sports (at all levels) received the largest direct Government budgetary allocation in 2005 (i.e., 42 % of the funds allocated) however Education and Sports received only 7% of the total donor support.

Figure 2. 2005 Budgetary Allocation by Sector Ministry for Ghana

(a) Funds Allocated from the Government of Ghana



(b) Funds Allocated by Overseas Development Assistance



The Purpose of Higher Education

“The real University ... is that great heritage of rational thought that has been brought down to us through the centuries and which does not exist at any specific location. It's a state of mind which is regenerated throughout the centuries by a body of people who traditionally carry the title of professor, but even that title is not part of the real University.”

Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*

The quotation above represents the abstract of university education in Africa. In crafting its current strategy, the University of Ghana was very conscious of the fact that the outcome of any strategic planning process should not be a set of desirables as defined by the management and faculty of the university but instead should be a set of clear value-adding initiatives that could be “sold” to its stakeholders. The importance of this view lies in the fact that there appears to be an ever-increasing gap between tertiary education’s “wish list” and the willingness of the public (taxpayers, legislators, parents and consumers) to pay for it - much of this gap is linked to the issue of “relevance” of higher education in terms of the skills provided and the requirements of the job market. The quotation below represents the outcome for this search for relevance.

“A general formulation of the mission of a university in Africa today would certainly contain the prime responsibility to provide men and women adequately trained to contribute to the development of the nation and of the community surrounding it”

Narciso Matos, *North-South Cooperation to Strengthen Universities in Africa*

Of course the search for quality and excellence as well as the development objective are not mutually exclusive. The establishment of centres of excellence expanding the frontiers of human knowledge in the key areas of water, health, and environment – for their sustained use is a common response by university to meet the development challenge. It is also interesting to note that very few of the private universities in Ghana run courses in classics, or in expensive subjects like the basic and applied science.

The Strategic Vision of the University of Ghana

Founded in 1948 the University College of the Gold Coast became the University College of Ghana on the attainment of Ghana’s independence in March 1957. The university was set-up for the purpose of providing and promoting university education, learning, and research. As a

University College, a special relationship existed with the University of London, which supervised its academic programmes and awarded University of London external degrees to successful students. By an act of Parliament in 1961, the University College of Ghana attained sovereign university status with authority to award its own degrees and thus the University of Ghana was established. It is the oldest and largest of the six public universities in Ghana. Apart from the public universities, there has been a recent (over the past decade) growth in private institutions of higher education, though it must be pointed out that the spread of subjects taught in these institutions is rather limited.

The World Bank, the AAU and nine major international and regional scientific institutions in Africa, as well as several funding agencies advocate strategic planning as the first most important step African universities must take to regain initiative and shape their future (Ekong & Plante, 1996; Banya & Elu, 2001). Strategic Planning is interpreted as a process of consultation involving the university leadership, representatives of the academic staff, students and of the entire academic community, as well as representatives of the state, the government, and other constituencies in society. As a process of consultation, it should generate understanding and consensus among the most relevant stakeholders and as such, is an indispensable step for the university to adjust its role to the expectations of society and to ensure the support needed for the implementation of the approved plans.

The University of Ghana 2001 – 2010 Corporate Strategic Plan

The University of Ghana 2001 – 2010 Corporate Strategic Plan ((University of Ghana, 2001) was prepared using the Hax method of Strategic Planning as developed by the Sloan School of Management of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The plan provides a disciplined approach to strategic planning through which management defines the future of their organisation, taking into account the realities of both the internal and external parameters that impact the business. It involves the identification of the key challenges, which the organization needs to overcome to ensure the achievement of its pre-defined purpose. These challenges drive the formulation of the strategy, stated as high-level Strategic Thrusts. The Strategic Thrusts identified for the University of Ghana are given in Table 1. The Strategic Thrusts are then broken down into specific Action Plans with appropriate resources determined and secured for them. Finally, the process defines measures and milestones by which the plan may be managed. The Hax methodology as applied to the University of

Ghana looked at the organization from three strategic perspectives – Corporate, Faculty & Function/Departmental.

Table 1. Key Strategic Thrusts for the University of Ghana Corporate Strategic Plan 2001 - 2010

1. Mobilize and secure required financial resources from Government and third parties to ensure the achievement of its short and long-term objectives.
2. Create a performance driven organizational structure and professionalise Human Resource management.
3. Develop consumer need-driven programmes and third party linkages.
4. Design and operate a reliable, functional, relevant, and cost effective Information and Communication Technology (ICT) system and related services to drive all initiatives.
5. Review structure of governance, statutes, rules, and regulations of the University to meet current requirements for effectiveness and efficiency.
6. Enhance and rehabilitate the existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure capable of supporting the growth and expansion in programs.
7. Actively enhance and leverage the comparative strengths and core competencies of research, teaching, and extension services.
8. Privatise no-core/non-performing activities and units.
9. Restore and strengthen integrity of Financial Management
10. Actively market and disseminate information about the University and its outputs.

In the consultative phase a new mission statement was prepared for the University:

“Our mission is to develop world-class human resources and capabilities to meet national development needs and global challenges through quality teaching, learning, research, and knowledge dissemination.

We are committed to build on our core strengths of a centre of excellence for high quality teaching and research, relevant institutions and good infrastructure and our unique competencies in the sciences, medicine, humanities, law and business, cultural studies, information technology and other emerging disciplines, to secure and sustain world-class competitive advantages in a stable democratic environment.

We are committed to build deeper awareness of the needs of our consumers, especially students, the private and public sectors, government and the world community and re-orient our teaching, research and extension activities and harmonize synergies between disciplines to achieve operational excellence.

We are committed to promote innovation, relevant and cutting-edge technology, leadership development and an enterprise culture, to enhance the delivery of value to our consumers and stakeholders.

Our operations are governed by the highest level of integrity, ethical standards, openness, and fairness underpinned by a reward and recognition system that is performance driven.

It can be seen that the mission of the University is slanted towards the University as “an agent of development” rather than University as the “Church of Reason”. The University has managed to successfully implement its strategic plan and has carried out a mid-term evaluation on the achievements under the plan.

External influences to Policy Development

The economic stagnation and decline of the socioeconomic conditions in Africa during the late seventies, throughout the eighties and the early part of the nineties impacted negatively in each and every university in the continent (Boyer, 2002). In most cases government allocations to universities became insufficient and totally unrelated to the actual financial needs to maintain and develop the institutions (Sawyer, 2002). In this context, donor agencies often play a dominant and determinant role by providing much needed funds to continue with some basic programmes (van der Westhuizen, 2002). Unfortunately however, very often the donor grants earmarked for specific projects, have strict conditions for disbursement, reporting and financial statements, and very seldom are these conditions coordinated with institutional policies. Through their grants, funding agencies can obtain increased influence over the institutions (Brock-Utne, 2003). Donors or external university “partners” now determine activities, reporting cycles and procedures, negotiate and control directly projects or individual units, and in general interfere and limit the autonomy of the institution and their capacity to establish priorities (ACU, 2001; Benneh, 2002).

*“The woods are lovely dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep.
And miles to go before I sleep. And miles to go before I sleep.”*

Robert Frost, Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

When about one third of a nation’s operating budget is supplied by donors it is clear that donors will have a strong say in the direction of growth – and donor promises/pledges when not fulfilled can have lasting impacts on institutions. It is appreciated that, just like the weary traveller in the classic poem by the American Poet Robert Frost, donors do get fatigued. A number of documents set out good practice for effective aid (e.g., Rogerson and de Renzio, 2005). The seven habits of effective aid discussed at the Rome Declaration on Aid Harmonisation are:

- (i) Aligning financing on partner country priorities,
- (ii) Improving aid predictability,
- (iii) Relying on country systems,

- (iv) Increasing donor complementarity,
- (v) Intensifying and incentivising joint action,
- (vi) Ensuring mutual accountability, and
- (vii) Strengthening systemic capacity.

They also include two cross-cutting imperatives built into each of these aims: first, to design and implement all actions in terms of their development results; and second, to build them up in specific country contexts, ranging from the most fragile to the most stable and sophisticated.

Despite the above, we still find situations where donors violate their declared support for national ownership by demanding specific actions and institutional arrangements before project implementation. Donors also are often ill equipped to determine what kind of policies and institutional structures are the most appropriate, considering the disparity of experiences from industrialised countries and developing countries (Stiglitz, 1998). Donor policies are also often blinkered, lacking the appreciation of the diversity and complexity characterising institutions such as Universities in developing countries (Samoff & Carrol 2002; Samoff, & Bidemi, 2004).

Globalisation, Policy Development and Policy Implementation

“All those who think that an African university degree is as good as a Western one are fooling themselves. They do not even have enough money for food, let alone pursue higher knowledge. If I have a choice I know which one I will choose.”

Ken Ng, Australia; response to a BBC Africa Live Radio Phone in September 2003

The above statement shows that even as the world becomes a “global village” and with all the improvements in communication, it will take a very long time for stereotypes to vanish. The impacts of globalisation include social change as local economies are absorbed within world capital and commodity markets dominated by multinational companies. Secondly, globalisation results in the shattering of the specificity of cultural identity and value systems, partly as a function of international media. A third effect is urbanization and the disturbed balance between man and nature. Globalisation is not restricted to the economic sphere only. It also pertains to culture. It affects peoples' identities, and their world view. Globalisation does not operate on a level playing field. It has differential impact from area to area, due to the relative distribution of natural resources, the standard of communications, the level of

education, the existence of trade barriers, and the economic situation in general. While economic globalisation is legitimised with respect to increased efficiency of production and optimization of social welfare for the global community as a whole, it also means that economic processes are becoming disembodied: i.e. a process whereby economic activities are "lifted out" of the local context within which they occur and become reconstructed across spatial boundaries. This has direct relevance to how Universities must evolve in order to survive; the policy direction of a University has to be broadened to take into account a much wider stakeholder/use base, i.e., a regional approach rather than a "city" approach.

An examination of up-coming meetings in higher Education for the latter half of 2005 indicates that the discussion on the use of e-learning and the concept of "universities without walls" is continuing in Africa (see Table 2.).

Table 2. List of Selected International Meetings on Higher Education for the last half of 2005

Meeting	Organiser	Venue	Date
Post-Globalisation: Higher Education Institutions facing the Knowledge Society/Economy and GATS	International Higher Education Foundation, Mexico	Veracruz, Mexico	July 21-23, 2005
The African University in the 21st Century SAARDHE 2005 Conference	University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus	Durban, South Africa	June 27-29 2005
2nd International Conference on Open and Online Learning (ICOOL 2005)	University of Mauritius in the context of WCCE 2005	Cape Town, South Africa	July 4-7, 2005
International Conference on Science and Technology - Science and Technology for Self-Reliance: Challenges for Developing Countries	The Federal University of Technology	Akure, Nigeria	August 14-19, 2005
1st African Regional Conference of Vice Chancellors, Provosts and Deans of Science, Engineering and Technology	ANSTI/UNESCO	Accra, Ghana	Nov. 15-17, 2005
International Barcelona Conference on Higher Education: The Financing of Universities	Technical University of Catalonia (UPC),	Barcelona, Spain	Nov. 30 to Dec. 2, 2005

This is where part of the problem lies. There is much research and information available on the impact of globalisation, new forms of education delivery, (e.g., Africa-America Institute and the African Virtual University, 2002) and the role of the market on policy development and implementation, but this research does not look at the ways Universities in developing countries can turn the challenges of globalisation into opportunities. For example, peripheral communities (and that would include the sheltered community of the average African University) which were previously shielded from the pressure of the international information industry are now becoming deeply and extensively connected to the outside world through global communication networks. If effectively utilised such networks could become an integrated part of coping strategies for African Universities in the face of globalization. For instance, new technologies could be employed as part of distance educational programs that will enable greater access to higher education. This may change the latent role that the educational system has played in the past, namely as "a door-opener" to the national job market.

For the purpose of furthering discussion, three examples of different approaches used in relation to support to the University of Ghana are presented below, each illustrates in greater detail the issues that have been presented above.

A failed approach to project delivery NUFU PRO 38. 2/91 Freshwater Entomology of Ghana

The following is a summary based on the account of independent assessors of the above project. This programme was a continuation of the NUFU project PRO 38/91 UiB/UO, Ghana Freshwater Entomology which was initiated during the first phase of NUFU programmes. Its continuation was based on the apparent success of the first phase. The project involved the Department of Zoology, University of Ghana and the former Institute of Aquatic Biology of the Ghanaian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, on the one hand and the Museum of Zoology, University of Bergen, Norway on the other. Its objectives are to establish the basis for the development and application of systematic biological techniques, and transfer the knowledge and skills needed to enable Ghanaian researchers and students to manage future projects in biodiversity, biosystematics, ecosystem dynamics, and environmental impact associated with freshwater. Unfortunately, these laudable goals and objectives were not even pursued let alone achieved. The contract for the programme was not

signed by the Ghanaian partners. Their reasons for not signing revolve around their relationship with their Norwegian counterparts. The Ghanaian partners complained bitterly of being completely excluded from the process leading to the formulation of the final proposal for this second phase of the programme, only being asked to sign the final document at the end of these processes. They could not sign because the proposal took no account whatever of their academic interests, the interests of their various institutions and the interests of the country at large. In the training part of the programme serving academic staff students were by-passed in favour of non-serving students. The research project did not accord with the research priorities of, at least, the Department of Zoology. What is even more worrisome is that the programme was implemented without the concurrence of the Ghanaian partner institutions, the Ghanaian sector being run directly from Norway. On their part the Norwegian partners resented the demands of their Ghanaian counterparts that funding for training should be used for their serving staff rather than other students, and that computers and microscopes earmarked for the enrolled students be made available for general use in the Department.

This is a typical example of a donor institution adopting a patronising attitude – not a case of equal partners in development.

A new way of supporting development through training linked to country needs: CIDA Youth Education and Training Awards CYETA Africa

This is an awards program for professional development, education and training in the home country, with priority given to applicants dedicated to their country's progress through their work for Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations and other employers engaged in key development sectors. The pilot program is being run in four African countries Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali and Senegal in the period 2004 -2006. The objective of the CIDA Youth Education and Training Awards (CYETA) is to develop young African leaders and practitioners who will aid the development of their country. CYETA provides financial assistance, on a competitive basis, to developing country citizens for professional development education and training, **offered in their home country**, designed to strengthen individual and organizational capacity. To ensure that resources and inputs result in sustainable and longer-term impacts and local leadership development, the awards have a youth focus. The program is sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency

(CIDA) in partnership with the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE). CBIE is the executing agency for the program, responsible for all management aspects and reporting to CIDA. The awards are in two categories, (i) Short-term Training Awards with maximum value CDN \$2,500 and Academic Awards with a maximum of CDN \$5,000 per year. The support is principally to contribute to subsistence expenses (for one academic year/10 months) of awardees enrolled in a certificate, diploma or master's program of up to two years in length. Approximately 100 Short-term Training Awards and 40 Academic Awards will be given. Despite the small quantum of the award, Universities, by the use of supporting documentation, influence the deposition of the awards. This academic year, students from the University of Ghana in the areas of Environmental Science, Oceanography and Fisheries as well as Social Work have benefited from the CYETA scheme.

Convergence of Sciences: inclusive technology innovation processes for better integrated crop and soil management

The project is financed by the Wageningen University, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directorate General of Development Cooperation), and the Global Integrated Pest Management Facility in Rome. In this project, the main capacity building output from the side of the Universities will be four PhD students from the National University of Benin and five from the University of Ghana. A new approach to research is being used. Instead of research being monopolized and driven by scientists, the project seeks to involve end-users, in this case farmers, in the development and execution of this process driven project. The project reports speak of an energetic tension to which all stakeholders contribute, requiring collective cognitive processes. The different actors, scientists, students, and farmers converge in terms of their perception of the context, their theories, and their values, and agree on collective action with respect to common problems. In an interdisciplinary and comparative way, participatory agricultural innovation processes are being analysed, and more efficient and effective models for agricultural technology development have resulted, including collective action approaches and institutional innovation. Key underlying issues determining the successes and constraints of participatory technology development approaches are being analysed by comparing case studies in Africa and Asia, by developing technology assessment and innovation activities, and by implementing a farmer field activity in participatory technology development and community mobilization in Benin and Ghana. The differences in

outcome between both countries are also being compared in order to establish the location-specificity in technology development.

Conclusions and Recommendations

"The challenge in bridging the gap between science and decision making is in blending reasoning with vision."

Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO

Increasingly, universities must rely on their own, individual performance in order to secure sufficient funding for higher quality programmes of teaching and research

Hans van Ginkel, Rector United Nations University

Currently the University of Ghana, through the Office of the Dean, International Programmes, manages Memoranda of Understanding, Staff/Student Exchange Protocols, and Project Agreements with over 170 Universities, Partner Institutions, and Foundations. Each cooperating partnership is distinctive on its genesis, goals, and modalities. It is therefore impossible to establish rules which could be universally applicable. However the Association of African Universities and the Development of African Education Working Group on Higher Education have some guidelines based on their cumulative experience, which serve as a base for the following recommendations:

- Initiatives should be prepared jointly and each partner should be associated as much as possible with the decisions that need to be taken at every stage of a programme.
- Partnerships must be clearly imbedded within an institutional framework
- The building of capacity should be an explicit and well-articulated goal, and should include all-important aspects of the scientific process.
- The creation of other capacities such as for comprehensive institutional and programme management and dissemination of results should be integral to all initiatives
- Budgets should provide resources for supplementing the income of the persons involved (e.g. honoraria linked to research output, generous allowances for fieldwork and travel to conferences, etc.) so as to ensure their full-time commitment.
- Recognition all persons involved in the scientific process leading to academic publications.

Perhaps the most important recommendation is that of ownership – which in turn breeds sustainability. Helleiner (2005) notes that there must be international recognition, that African development projects and programmes must be African-led and African-owned, rather than, as too frequently, driven by external institutions and donors. It is the hope that this set of discussion will bring Universities in Africa closer to that goal.

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