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## **NEWS**

### **OSSREA Mission to RWANDA 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014 -4<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Mission to Rwanda had three components. Firstly Professor Herman Musahara had to attend a Equity Bank Group Board Retreat as a member of the Rwanda Subsidiary Board from 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014. Previously OSSREA had presented to the Bank a proposal for partnership and so the retreat in Rwanda therefore was used for OSSREA's benefit in following up earlier approaches. Secondly, Professor Herman Musahara met various persons with a purpose of establishing strategic relations with OSSREA on a number of proposals. The final part is on the workshop held by OSSREA Rwanda Chapter mentioned above where Professor Herman Musahara was joined by Mr Belete Hailu.

#### **2. EQUITY BANK –OSSREA LINKS**

The Equity Bank started with a dinner at Serena in Kigali with workers of the Equity Rwanda Subsidiary. It was the first time Professor Herman Musahara attended any Equity Bank function after joining OSSREA and it was interesting to find out that some other members used to be members of OSSREA and have a rich background knowledge of OSSREA including Professor Shem Adhola. The discussions revealed a potential role of well minded, old guard or Professors with proven support to the promotion of the social sciences. The Professors own recall of such people would be well supported by a good tracer study and possible good OSSREA story.

The second day saw the holding of the Rwanda Equity Bank Board meeting and visiting the Office of The President of Rwanda to meet His Excellency Paul Kagame. The third day before leaving for Northern Rwanda for the retreat, Professor Musahara visited the Governor of the Central Bank and later the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning and talked with the Governor of the possibility of capacity building interventions for PhD candidates from the civil services, an idea which was explored with University College of Dublin but now in a context of possibility with OSSREA. Professor Musahara also met the Vice Governor Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa a former Minister who once officiated at the OSSREA Poverty Assessment workshops in Nairobi in 2007 in the absence of the

Kenyan counterpart and it was indicated to her the potential support she may have for OSSREA that shall be explored in the near future.

During the retreat there was the chance of seeking an update on an OSSREA project idea on collaboration with Equity Bank particularly with the Chief Operating Officer and possible avenues with the Group Foundation. The proposal has not been advanced further and it was agreed that further elaboration may be necessary.

A discussion with the Managing Director of the Rwanda Subsidiary suggested that active collaboration with OSSREA may be possible from 2015 as presently the subsidiary may not have profitability indicators that would allow sponsoring an OSSREA project such as a book on Rwanda.

### **3. OSSREA WORKSHOP**

The workshop took place at Huye Campus of University of Rwanda for two days. Day one was reserved for the Post Genocide presentations and Day two was on Teaching History in Rwanda. It was opened by the Dean of Social Sciences, Dr Augustine Rudacogora on behalf of the Principal College of Arts and Social Sciences. Introductory messages were given by Mr Bernard Rutikanga as Executive Committee member and Professor Herman Musahara, Director of Research for the OSSREA Secretariat.

Ten presentations were made followed by discussion:

1. ***Genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda.*** By Professor Deo Byanafashe
2. ***Denial of Genocide against Tutsi in Neighbouring Countries.*** By Noel Bernard Rutikanga
3. ***Identity Politics and Reconciliation in Rwanda.*** By Dr Charles Kabwete Mulinda
4. ***20 years after: Youth, Hope and Rebuilding Rwanda.*** By Odeth Kantengwa
5. ***Promotion of Entrepreneurship in Post Genocide Rwanda:*** By Jean Baptiste Ndikubwimana
6. ***Resolving Refugees and IDPs -20 years after Genocide against Tutsi.*** By Professor Charles Gasarasi
7. ***Features and Factors of Rwanda Socio Economic Development 1994-2014.*** By Professor Herman Musahara
8. ***Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Peace Building in Post Genocide Rwanda.*** Mr Tony Ntalindwa

9. ***ICTs and Poverty Reduction in Post Genocide Rwanda.*** By Claude Bizimana

10. ***Fertility in Post Genocide Rwanda.*** By Pierre Claver Bizimana

## OSSREA Attends the COMESA/ACBF Meeting

OSSREA attended the COMESA/ACBF meeting on Capacity Building in Economic and Trade Policy Analysis and Research Project from the 11-13 of August 2014 at the Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya. The main purpose of the workshop was to launch the project, identify emerging research areas from the key stakeholders, facilitate creation of partnerships and networks with leading policy research think tanks and training institutes and form basis for developing the COMESA Research Agenda.

The workshop was opened by Dr. Eng. Karanja Kibicho, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Kenya whose speech was read on his behalf by Ambassador Robert Ngesu, Political and Diplomatic Secretary in the same Ministry. He welcomed the participants to Nairobi and thanked the Secretariat for organizing the workshop and ACBF for providing funds for the project. He pointed out that the COMESA regional market needs to be continually consolidated into a seamless economic space, through policy coherence and removal of barriers to trade. He emphasized that COMESA and Africa as a whole needs to take action and build strong economic relationships for the good of their people.

The Principal Secretary also pointed out the significant role that policy research plays in regional integration and said that the grant will enhance the capacity of the COMESA Secretariat in economic and trade policy research and analysis.

The ACBF Executive Secretary, Professor Emmanuel Nnadozi, in his message conveyed by Mr Ernest Etti, congratulated the COMESA Secretariat for organizing the launch workshop. He informed the workshop that the COMESA/ ACBF partnership started in 2002 when ACBF provided a grant of \$1.5 million for capacity building of the Secretariat. The second grant of \$3 million to support the Secretariat and Member States to carry out economic and Trade policy analysis and research was signed in February 2013. The ACBF was pleased to learn about the need to identify emerging policy research needs and establishment of partnerships in the region. The support to COMESA is part of the ACBF's Medium Term Strategic plan to work more with Regional Economic Communities.

The Director, Trade Customs and Monetary Affairs, Dr Francis Mangeni, welcomed the participants to the workshop. He acknowledged the ACBF contribution, introduced the project and its purpose to support evidence based policy making in Africa and called upon the active participation during the workshop.

Dr Mangeni pointed out that while the global market is important for the COMESA, the Member States are encouraged to consider regional integration. He introduced the project by clearly pointing out that the overall objective of the project is to enhance the institutional capacity of the COMESA Secretariat to support economic policy research and trade analysis and negotiation towards contributing to the effective implementation of MTSP 2011-2015. The project has three main components: institutional strengthening, applied policy research and dissemination, and capacity building for trade policy analysis and trade negation. Dr. Mangeni emphasized that one area where the region has been failing is making decisions which are not research oriented hence this project will play a critical role in ensuring that the technical staff of the secretariat as well as the coordinating ministries are equipped with the necessary capacity to undertake policy research. He pointed out that there is need for each of the technical staff undergoes retooling courses especially on modelling so as to keep in pace with emerging policy research techniques.

### **Role of Policy Research in Regional Integration and Areas of Collaboration in COMESA**

Professor Paschal Mihyo, the Executive Director of OSSREA made a presentation on *Emerging Policy and Research Areas*. He started by giving a background of OSSREA, its functions and the kind of work it has done, including recently compiling a digest of OAU and AU Protocols passed between 1963 and 2013 and the challenges that the Regional Economic Communities were facing in implementing the roadmap to the African Economic Community. He outlined a number of challenges in African integration, including multiple membership, NTBs, low intra-African trade and the bad image perception that other regions have about Africa. Furthermore, he lamented the absence of a researched African position on how to deal with emerging economic powers such as China.

Professor Mihyo made the following proposals for research:

- a. Develop the capacity of African countries to gain knowledge of the market conditions and environmental requirements applicable to developed country markets so as to be able to access those markets;
- b. Compile a Compendium of regulations that exporters have to fulfil in order to enter the markets in the COMESA region;
- c. Develop the appetite and capacity of policy officials to conduct quantitative research and the promotion of use of secondary data in analysis;
- d. Working with parliamentarians to facilitate understanding of regional protocols so that

they could pass laws and regulations on free movements of persons and establishment; and

- e. Research on climate finance and promotion of climate compatible agricultural and other activities.

### **Recommendations and Appreciations**

The following recommendations were made after the panel discussion:

- i. There is need to organize a briefing session for researchers at the end of the Summit and Council meetings;
- ii. Researchers need to be incorporated in evidence based policy making;
- iii. There is need to develop publications that address contemporary research areas and these can be presented to the decision making organs of COMESA;
- iv. Triple Helix approach should be adopted to incorporate all relevant stakeholders;
- v. Each country should have a research council within government structures; and
- vi. Countries should adhere to the decision of allocating 1% of their GDP to research, as per the Council decision.

The meeting ended with a number of recommendations and the most important one being COMESA should convene a meeting of the think tanks and private sector in the region and brief them on the frontier issues for research that would have come out of the Policy Organs' meetings.

## OSSREA has a Joint Meeting with CPST

OSSREA had a joint meeting with The Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training of the Kenya Parliament (CPST) on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August 2014 in Addis Ababa at the OSSREA Secretariat. CPST was represented by the Director, Professor Nyokabi Kamau and the Director of Research and Curriculum Development while OSSREA was represented by Professor Paschal Mihyo and his team.

After welcoming CPST to OSSREA, Professor Mihyo talked about the formation of OSSREA in 1980 and the organisational structure as well as it working with COMESA, SADC and IGAD. The Directors in turn also talked about their respective Directorates. Finally Professor Kamau talked about CPST and how it came into being. Lastly it was agreed that both parties would agree upon a memorandum of understanding which would be signed in the future.



**Professor Nyokabi Kamau and Professor Paschal Mihyo during Deliberations**

## OSSREA Mission to MOZAMBIQUE 28<sup>th</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The OSSREA Mozambique Chapter held a two week workshop from 18<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2014 at the Eduardo Mondlane University. The OSSREA team travelled to Maputo to attend and officiate the closing ceremony as well as ensure accountability of the grant and compliance with the agreement.

### 2. THE WORKSHOP

The workshop brought together a cohort of 22 participants mainly from Eduardo Mondlane University, of which eight were women. Its original aim was to offer a research methodology workshop to PhD students although in reality it included Masters and some undergraduate students. It was under the coordination of Aderito Machava, the Liaison Officer that the course was given.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- i. to impart skills in quantitative and qualitative methodologies;
- ii. to expose the participants to analytical skills required to evaluate policies;
- iii. to analyze and assess research orientations, strategies and diffusion, evaluate programmes and projects; and
- iv. to expose participants to computer skills in research and training in other methods relevant to the social sciences.

Week one was reserved for Qualitative Methods led by Professor Zimba and Week two by a visiting Professor for Quantitative methods. On the last day Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August OSSREA attended the closing ceremony officiated by the Director for Scientific Research UEM, Professor Capece.

### 3. THE MEETINGS

#### 3.1. Meeting the Vice Rector of Academics

On the morning of Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2014 the OSSREA team met the Vice Rector in charge of Academic Affairs, Dr Anna Maria Mondjana together with her Director of the International Office, The members of the OSSREA Executive Committee based in Mozambique, the Liaison Officer of the Mozambique Chapter and two more officers from her office. The meeting had been requested by the

Mozambique Chapter and it was meant to discuss the collaboration between OSSREA and Eduardo Mondlane University and to see how the visibility of OSSREA in Mozambique can be enhanced. The Director of Research presented in brief what OSSREA does and previous relations with UEM. He also commended the work of the Mozambique Chapter and its contribution to OSSREA leadership as it has always had members on the Executive Committee for the third term at present.

Briefly the Vice Rector offered full support to OSSREA in terms of:

- i. Updating the existing MoU;
- ii. Linking the Chapter with centres at UEM more closely especially the Centre for African Studies, the Philosophy Department and the Centre for Gender Studies;
- iii. Supporting efforts to raise the visibility of OSSREA and how the Chapter can work with neighbouring Chapters such as Angola; and
- iv. Following up on how the ‘knowledge harvesting’ approach used for policy forums can be promoted at UEM.

### **3.2. Meeting the trainees**

In the afternoon Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2014 the OSSREA team visited the class where trainees were undertaking an evaluation of the programme. This was in the presence of the three trainers of the Research Methodology led by Professor Zimba, the Liaison Officer and a member of the Executive Committee. A message of support and congratulations from the Executive Director was delivered by the Director of Research. He reiterated the need to acquire research tools, the role of research in modern development and the role of the social sciences in current inquiry and their role of developing careers that involve research for solutions. Other speakers also emphasized the role OSSREA has played.

### **3.3 Meeting the Chapter Executive Committee**

The Director of Research met three members of the Executive Committee; the Liaison Officer, Mr Aderito Machava, the Secretary and the Treasurer. The Director wanted to know what was happening and how the Chapter is repositioning itself to raise its visibility as the Vice Rector of Academics had suggested. The LO indicated that the Chapter is alive and has an office but there is shortage of funds to buy consumables and at least a printer. The Director of Research used examples from other Chapters like Rwanda to indicate how the Chapter can move on a self sustaining path. It may look difficult

because of the challenges of using English but in the Lusophone Chapters it is still possible for Chapters to generate their own funds. The LO requested a letter of endorsement as LO so that he can discharge his duties more effectively.



**Group Photograph of the Mozambique Workshop Participants**

#### **4. OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS**

From the visit and speeches it seems that:

- i. The Mozambique Chapter has been active notwithstanding the language barriers and the successful holding of the Research Methodology was a testimony to that. Portuguese is more widely used in Mozambique than English;
- ii. Support from the host University and formalization by an updated MoU is important but the content of the MoU should be substantive to help the Chapter operate and grow;

- iii. The Chapter should link up with more institutions in the host Universities other than through Research Methodology sessions only. The Chapter needs to raise its visibility and build synergies with the rest of the University;
- iv. It was advised that OSSREA when organizing a training workshop should consider holding it outside the host organization to ensure full attendance; and
- v. The Proposals developed in the training were rated by the trainers as being of high quality.

## **Feature Articles**

### **Underperformance of Students at Institutions of Higher Learning in Zimbabwe in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Possible Explanations**

*Percyslage Chigora<sup>‡</sup>, Dorothy Goredema<sup>✉</sup> and Ireen Mudeka<sup>©</sup>*

#### **Abstract**

Decline in performance levels not only at institutions of higher learning but even at lower levels of education have been noticeable in Zimbabwe in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This is despite all these efforts made by the government, it has come to the attention of college and university authorities and even the parents that many students in these institutions of higher learning are failing to perform as per the expected standards. The quality of graduates produced together with the degree or diploma classes obtained by most students at the end indicates poor performance by these students in their various majors. It is within this backdrop that these researchers attempt to give possible explanation to the underperformance of students at institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Methodologically, the researchers made use of secondary sources such as published books and articles, interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires in the writing of this paper. The data collected from these questionnaires was complemented with information collected from interviews. Key informants included college and university students and university staff. Views and opinions were also solicited from the general public. The information, facts, opinions and views solicited from these different groups of people provided the researchers with valuable information needed in the writing of this paper.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Formal education is considered a key factor for social-economic development. Cognisant of this fact, Zimbabwe as a country is committed to providing quality higher education to its citizens as evidenced by the establishment of numerous technical colleges and state universities nationwide since independence. Consequently it has become the dream of every parent to send their children to a university or technical college to get a quality education. To the African parents, apart from its direct

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functions of increasing knowledge, building skills, values and the enhancement of critical thinking, formal education still remains the vehicle for economic development and social mobility. To the national leaders and policy makers, it is generally believed that the basis for any true development must commence with the development of a country's human resources. To that extent, the Zimbabwe government strives to ensure that higher and tertiary education is availed to its citizens particularly the youth regardless of one's social background. In essence, measures to ensure quality education that will help students to acquire skills, knowledge, values and attitudes all necessary in enabling them to contribute positively to the social, economic, political and moral development of the nation have been put in place. Despite all these efforts made by the government, it has come to the attention of not only college and university authorities, the parents but also general public commentators that many students in these institutions of higher learning are failing to perform as per the expected standard. The quality of graduates produced together with the degree or diploma classes obtained by most students at the end indicates poor performance by these students in their various majors. Even efforts have been made to positively mark and grade graduates in way that make it present an even normal distribution curve, rather than an indication of an individual's intellectual capability. It is from this background that this research seeks to explain the possible factors that have led to a decline in performance of some students, not only at institutions of higher learning but even also at lower levels of education.

## **CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS**

The paper is informed by Tinto's theory of integration (Tinto 1983). According to this theory, students need to integrate socially and academically if they are to perform well at colleges or universities. However many students find this process of integration difficult since the process involves interactions between students themselves and between students and lecturers .The general view upheld by the concept is that as students make a transition from high school to college or university life, they encounter problems emanating from adjustments from high school environment to the more independent academic and social life associated with college or university education. These changes are likely to affect all students to a greater or lesser extent. The effects of these changes will become evident a few months after students join the college or university (Maxwell 1996). For a transition to be made smoothly students need to integrate socially and academically. Failure to integrate will result in underperformance. Unable to engage with their new environment and the inability to cope with the new personal and academic demands imposed upon them will result in underperformance (Rickson et.al 1995). Successful academic integration is demonstrated by the students' academic performance

and the student's ability to interact effectively with lecturers and instructors .On the other hand, social integration refers to a process in which the student is able to make friends on campus or to fit within campus life (Grosset 1991).

According to Rickinson B. and Rutherford (1995), if the student fails to be successful in what is learnt, the result is a dislike of work, procrastination, stress, dissatisfaction with university or college staff as well as difficulties in dealing or coping with academic demands and workloads. Failure to integrate socially may result in students experiencing emotional problems. According to Grosset (1991), such students may find themselves having difficulties making friends, they experience home sickness, are disoriented, feel isolated and will have feelings of being lost. Thus the concept of integration upholds the view that students who lack the appropriate preparation for life at university find it more difficult to make the necessary personal and academic adjustments. Students who would have failed to develop independent study habits in their first year, experience difficulties in carrying out intellectual tasks such as analyses and critical evaluation in subsequent years (Harris et.al 1995).

## A SYNOPTIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While many scholars have examined the problem of students withdrawal from tertiary institutions globally, very little exists on student underperformance particularly in Africa and Zimbabwe. Even globally, the most prevalent work seeks to establish strategies for student retention in tertiary institutions and to explain student withdrawals from the same institutions. For example, Maxwell (1996), Rickinson B. and Rutherford (1995) among others represent the strand of Scholarship that focuses on reasons for students' withdrawal from tertiary institution in Western countries. Grosset (1991) also takes a different angle whereby he examines the possible ways to stem the problem of student withdrawal. Such scholarship thus either focuses on reasons for withdrawal or solution. While our own work builds on this literature it therefore shifts the angle of vision to students' underperformance which the above scholars merely stress as an adjunct.

Nevertheless, insofar as the scholars represented by Rutherford (1995) and Grosset (1991) refer to student underperformance as caused by students' failure to make a successful transition, the concomitant dislike of work, procrastination, stress, dissatisfaction with university or college life as well as difficulties in dealing or coping with academic demands and workloads, our work builds on this literature. It is on the foundation of this work that we stress that students' failure to integrate socially and academically may result in emotional problems for them making learning cumbersome. According

to Grosset (1991), such students may find themselves having difficulties making friends, they experience home sickness, are disoriented, feel isolated and will have feelings of being lost.

## **POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS: STUDENT RELATED FACTORS**

In an interview conducted with lecturers it was indicated that most students fail to perform because they would have chosen a wrong degree program. Balduf (2009) observed that underperformance among students at colleges or universities results when students choose a degree program merely for prestigious reasons not because they can perform well in the program. Students enroll to study Law, Medicine or Engineering, courses that would give them prestige. However, as they progress with the program, they begin to realize the bitter truth, that the program they took was nothing close to their capabilities. As course outlines become complex, students are overwhelmed. They start to feel as though they were not as brilliant as they believed. They become stressed out because of the high competition they face, they are unable to keep up the pace and grades plummet. This is when students realize that they are in the wrong program when it is already too late. A few will attempt to change programs, others will drop out of college or university altogether. Grayson (1996) argues that in most cases the majority end up indulging in socially related activities like parties and clubs. They find solace in drinking, drugs and smoking. They are disorganized, fail to complete assignments, bunk lectures and procrastinate. Thus a single poor decision on course selection can result in students facing many difficulties at colleges or universities.

Questionnaires given out to lecturers indicated that they believe that poor study habits by students contribute to a larger extent to their underperformance. Mr. Matsvimbo explained that most students do not know how to study or what to study. Many underperform because they resort to last minute studying or cramming (Matsvimbo interview 2014). Lecturers are of the view that students often do very little reading if any and they also do a poor job of taking notes. On top of that they do not have a culture of reading. How well one takes notes will save one from the hassles and stresses of last minute studying. According to Bailey et al. (2009) bad study habits occur when students have poor note taking skills, do not manage their time properly, procrastinate or do not complete assignments.

Some of the poor study habits cited by Bailey et al. (2009) which result in student underperformance in studying are while listening to music and eating too much food during studying which disrupts retention of material. In addition drinking alcohol while studying, working from one's bed is also a bad study habit. While it may be comfortable, the bed soothes the student to sleep. Students should also

avoid multi-tasking, that is, doing several different things at once. When one multi-tasks during study one may not be able to retain as much material as one would have done if they had focused purely on one task. If possible students must avoid a poor studying environment. Reading in a commune, bus or car are bad habits since they do not create an intense studying environment.

Procrastination to study, do assignments or any given tasks by students also results in underperformance. Emma Moyo (interview 2014), a student at Gweru technical college explained that students procrastinate because they are overwhelmed by too many things to do. Sometimes students feel that they do not have the skills or knowledge to handle given tasks or are not clear about what is expected or simply because they are not interested in the task. In some cases students procrastinate because they are afraid of getting a low grade or because they are perfectionists. However, Bailey et al. (2009) links student procrastination to lack of motivation, deficiencies to self-regulation, perfectionism, fear of failure, low self-esteem. Students will also have less interest in the assignment when they possess less writing skills and when they do not know about how to break large assignments down into independent parts.

Laziness is another factor which emerged as militating against the performance of students. Lecturers explained that it was laziness which make students plagiarize, write sub-standard assignments or even bunking of lectures. Due to laziness students underestimate the importance of studying. Consequently they go to lectures and exams unprepared. As a result of laziness, students end up lacking goals and purpose; they turn up late for lectures or do not attend lectures, leading to underperformance. On the same note, Balduf (2009) is of the opinion that absenteeism can also be a reflection of lack of motivation. When students are not motivated, a common outcome is that they lose the desire to attend classes, followed by absenteeism and plummeting grades. Indeed lateness and absenteeism reduce the amount of instructional time, students miss out on information. According to Mr. Tarugarira (interview 2014), a lecturer at one university in Zimbabwe, stressed that if a student was absent for two days or a week, it is the student's responsibility to make up for work missed. However, most students are not keen about doing so because in the first place they would have bunked the lectures because of laziness.

Poor time management also plays a role in the academic performance of students. A university or college is associated with exciting social life. Cook and Leckey (1999) observed that many students still associate the first year with meeting new people, making new friends, partying and getting away from home. Other inaccurate prior perceptions relate to the amount of time spent in lectures and study and the belief that the nature of learning would not differ too much from that experienced in secondary

school. As a result many students upon entering university or colleges indulge in excessive drinking and use of drugs. Sachiti (interview 2014) is of the opinion that peer pressure, coupled with the need to test new things with friends has left many students vulnerable, especially when they drink excessively. In most cases drinkers bunk lectures, fall behind their schoolwork, earn low grades and perform poorly in exams and assignments. For students who drink, drinking and using drugs become more important than studying and as a result students fail. In addition excessive drinking affects the mental health of students and often results in students having depressive moods. Mrs. Gumbo (interview 2014) a counsellor with one of the universities explained that student drinkers use illicit drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamines and heroin. Other cheap but fatal drinks used by students is what is commonly referred to as "*broncho*" and officer. She explained that students start from alcohol then later on move to harder and more serious substances.

Higher drinking levels increase the likelihood of sexual activity. Students who drink are more likely to engage in risky sexual activities like having sex with someone they do not know or they may fail to use birth control thus exposing themselves to sexual diseases and unwanted pregnancy. Female students can be sexually abused or assaulted when drunk and this can have a negative impact on their emotions. All these factors have a negative bearing on students' performance. Asked in a questionnaire why they drink, 80% of the students explained that they drink because alcohol makes it easier to meet other people, relaxes their social inhibitions and helps them have more fun. Of those interviewed, 86 % explained that alcohol is the inn thing at university, it breaks the ice and enhances social activity, allowing them to have more fun and facilitates mate bonding. Others explained that alcohol facilitates a connection with their peers. 30% said alcohol make women sexier, while 53% said it facilitates sexual relations. The point here is that most students end up focusing on more of these social activities and concentrating less on their academic work. Failure to manage time therefore leads to poor performance.

The use of social networks or the social media cases many college and university students fail to manage their time. From the questionnaires administered, 100% of the students indicated that they use Facebook, You tube, Blog, Twitter, My Space and Linkedin. As such they spend much of their time networking with friends, chatting and gossiping or inviting others to parties and drinking binges. Others are addicted to the internet. Internet addiction, which commonly refers to an individual's inability to control his or her use of the internet, adversely affects one's physical health, family life and academic performance. Due to internet addiction, many students become lazy to research using other

research methods besides the internet, which in most cases results in the culture of cutting and pasting. On top of all these networks, students also carry their phones to lectures. Here, excessive texting takes place. Texting during classes diverts students' attention. 90% of those interviewed admitted that they take their cell phones to lectures every day. All admitted to using their phones to text during class. Due to these wider networks students fail to develop planning skills and positive attitudes towards time. Poor time management and failure to allocate time properly is another cause for poor performance. Balduf (2009) is of the opinion that poor time management skill is one of the major causes why students underperform or fail to complete assignments and bunk lectures. The stress of having to balance so many social issues and obligations, academic projects causes a lot of pressure leaving students frazzled and possibly burnt out. All these social networks affect student performance because they distract students and are time wasting .Students fail to regulate time or balance the time allocated to social networking and academic obligations and the result is underperformance.

Romantic relationships can also affect performance. Having problems with one's boyfriend or girlfriend has proved to affect one's academic performance (Bulduf 2009). Most students will end up investing much time in their romantic relationships detracting them from their studies. To compound matters, such relationships have, in many cases resulted in pregnancy which for some, has led them into unplanned marriages. Here, managing domestic life, family responsibilities and marital duties takes much of students' time leading to serious cases of underperformance. The case proved worse in cases that we encountered in the course of our survey whereby over half of the girls impregnated in colleges also have an abusive spouse or where they have not been married and thus carry the stigma of rejection which is exhibited in their approach to social life and academia. Out of the twenty students interviewed at Chinhoyi, eight also stressed that problems in their homes, that is, where parents are infected with HIV and are dying have also affected their concentration and focus while others say they are currently in child headed households. However, some students from all the institutions visited emphasized that insofar as sexually related problems are concerned, the lecturers and other community members are the major culprits. Taking advantage of students' financial constraints and their new freedom afforded by university life, they exploit the girl child exchanging money for sex. Such relationships distract the girls from their work. The lecturers and older men from communities have left many girls pregnant. For those who were married, they stress that it is difficult to balance motherhood, marriage and school and also being dumped by a partner can be depressing, resulting in academic underperformance.

### **Teacher Related Factors**

During research it emerged that while students play a role in their poor performance at colleges and universities, lecturers also contribute to a larger extent to the academic underperformance of students. To that extent, this paper attempts to look at both lecturer and student related factors which contribute to the underperformance of students at institutions of higher learning.

According to Cook (2005), upon entering university or college, many students will be coming from a teacher dependence culture that is from primary to high school level. In all these levels, the major concern of both teachers and students is to ensure good academic results. Here, students learn or are taught to pass versus learning to know. From primary level to high school, teachers are paid to make students pass not to learn, understand and live the experiences. Knowledge gathering and improving of thinking and even the level of analysis are not major concerns of teachers at these levels. Thus pre-university education favours superficial learning facilitating a short term memory. Because teachers are mainly concerned with making students pass, one finds that students are strongly supported by their teachers not only through the teaching of relatively small groups but also by the control of and a focus on a prescribed syllabus.

However, when these students enter college or university many find it difficult to adjust or to switch on this university culture of independent thinking, hence they end up underperforming. As a result of a poor and passive learning culture at primary and high school levels, students find it difficult to learn how to think critically or to adapt to critical reasoning which is at the core of university education. In an interview with Mr. Sibanda (interview 2014) a university lecturer, it emerged that upon entering university, many do not know how to sift fact from opinion or how to come up with a clear written argument nor can most students objectively review conflicting reports of a situation or event. Mrs. King (interview 2014), another lecturer at one of the country's universities pointed out that university education requires more than memorizing. It requires thinking skills which many students lack or fail to acquire. As a result students underperform.

It also emerged that large classes are another factor which hinder students from performing well. Most universities in Zimbabwe strive to enroll large numbers of students. Large numbers translate to funds which are badly needed by these universities to continue functioning. During registration week, departments jostle for large numbers of students so as to remain functional and to survive the axe. While this can be understood, this move affects students' performance. From the research carried out at

Zimbabwe's six universities, it emerged that faculties of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce enroll large numbers which translate into large classes, some as large as 150-350 new students per semester. The unfortunate part is that large classes hinder effective contact between lecturers and students. Since the students are many, it also translates into more work and more time required to grade assignments. Consequently lecturers will find it extremely difficult to give prompt feedback to all the students. According to Mr. Nyathi (interview 2014), a lecturer, large classes also determine the teaching methods lecturers' use and in most cases lecturers are forced to use the lecture method, dictating and explaining notes to students. This method of teaching is not so helpful to students because it is not an interactive method of teaching. However, lecturers resort to this method because that is how they can teach the large classes. Griffiths (1999a) observed that small class sizes perform better academically than large sizes. He is of the opinion that a class of forty students is a large class. He posits that small group teaching is effective in improving the relationship between staff and students. Smaller classes encourage a collaborative approach to learning and in modelling the environment common in a workplace. With large groups, lecturers find it very difficult to support the academic progress of students, as well as catering for the individual needs and issues of assessment. In addition, it is difficult to treat students as individuals when one is dealing with a large class.

This problem of large classes is worsened by the fact that most universities no longer have tutorials for their students. Lecturers in universities in most parts of the world teach large classes and Graduate Assistants (G.As) break students down into smaller tutorial groups for effective and interactive reinforcement of what's learnt in lectures. Some lecturers actually attribute underperformance among students to lack of tutorials. Due to mass enrolment done at most Zimbabwean universities, the culture of university tutorials is now non-existent. According to Griffiths (1999a) a tutorial has a small number of students, as few as four but sometimes rising up to twenty, discussing a subject with a tutor. Lecturers interviewed pointed out that most universities have done away with tutorials or tutors because tutorials have financial implications which most of the universities cannot afford to meet or are not prepared to meet. According to Mr. Ncube (interview 2014), with the large classes in universities in recent years, tutorials have been rendered difficult to maintain. Furthermore, he pointed out that lecturers are not so keen to conduct tutorials since they obviously involve a greater commitment of time on the part of the lecturers. In addition, tutorials also require more space which most universities do not have on top of increasing timetable problems. The point we are trying to put

across here is that failure to conduct tutorials with students also contribute to underperformance of students to a certain extent.

Lack of commitment to one's work negatively affects the performance of students at universities or colleges. During a focus group discussion (2014) with university students in Bulawayo, it emerged that lecturers and college instructors also contribute to the underperformance of students. The students explained that many lecturers lack commitment to their work. The economic crisis of 2007-2009 was cited as another factor which has affected lecturers' attitudes and commitment to work. Students pointed out that due to the economic crisis experienced by the country in 2007-2009 many lecturers have resorted to finding other means of survival to go parallel with their work. To that extent, many have turned to farming, operating shops, flea markets, butgeries whilst others are engaged in cross border activities. Others solicit for posts as part time lecturers at other universities. At polytechnic colleges lecturers have resorted to selling foodstuffs like fruits, stationary to students to augment their income. Thus more pre-occupied with these money making ventures, lecturers' commitment to their work has been affected, which in turn affects the performance of students. Due to the lack of commitment, lecturers are not able to complete the topics outlined in the modules they teach. Durotaye (1993) is of the opinion that completion of the module provides a foundation for the next level to be built upon. He explained that when lecturers fail to complete a module, the content that should have been taught in the next level which is based on the previous is lost. According to Etsey (2005), as this continues, there is a backlog of content not taught and this affects the overall performance of students in that course. As university modules are interconnected, as such the non-completion of a module tends to have negative cumulative effects on the students such that as they move from level to level they encounter materials they do not have the foundation to build their study on. In the final analysis, this results in poor performance. Commenting on the effects of lecturers' lack of commitment to their work, Ikonta (2008) pointed out that lecturers should be made to realize that they are the bed rock of any educational system and should therefore show more responsibility and commitment to their work. Explaining the core-relation between the lecturer's commitment to student's academic performance, Lockheed (1991) posits that if a lecturers' work habit is low and lecturers lack enthusiasm, students' performance is also affected. This attitude prevents students from learning well and acquiring much classroom content and knowledge resulting in poor performance.

The waning commitment of university lecturers is partly promoted by the hours of contact lecturers have. Due to the flexibility of their teaching hours, lecturers are able to turn to other lucrative ventures

such as consultancy with various NGOs or international organizations or quasi government institutions. As already indicated, many have emerged as successful business people, whilst others have become farmers, finding it difficult to run the two or more daunting tasks. On top of these other ventures, at some university they also teach modules under visiting school, conventional, parallel, block-release programs. The same lecturers have to research and produce new knowledge, make contact supervisory visits to students on attachment, whilst supervising undergraduate dissertations, master`s or doctoral theses. All this juggling reduces concentration and the maintaining of a robust standing in the line of teaching. The result is that many fail to complete modules. In addition research, which is critical in bringing new knowledge and innovations that are critical to the development of students, suffers immensely.

From the focus group discussions conducted with students in Gweru, it emerged that at times the attitudes of lecturers towards students also contribute to them underperforming. Students explained that in some cases it is not a matter of them being dull or failing to perform as per the expected standards, but a matter of them being sabotaged by their lecturers. Many pointed out that at times some lecturers mystify education making it appear as if it is very difficult for students to excel in their studies. Consequently, lecturers deliberately make education appear tough for students by allowing only a few to pass. According to Tafadzwa (interview 2014) a university student, "Most lecturers have got that mentality that students must not be allowed to pass easily because during their days as students, it was difficult to pass." As such, a lecturer will make sure that in a class of ninety students only three people will get distinctions, and maybe ten get 2;1s, a handful 2:2s and the better half of the class gets third class passes. Students also pointed out that the other types of lecturers are those who strongly believe that students are not supposed to perform more than they did at university during their days as students. Thus they will make sure that they lower students' grades. In other words students accused lecturers of teaching for low grades. These sentiments were eye-openers and helped in explaining some of the factors behind the underperformance of students at colleges or universities in Zimbabwe. This may also explain why mentoring of young academics has proven difficult. This is because some lecturers fear being overtaken by students they would have taught.

Lack of motivation of both lecturers and students has a bearing on the academic performance of students. According to Ferranti (1968), a highly motivated person puts in the maximum effort in his or her job. On the other hand lack of motivation may contribute to ineffectiveness and inefficiency in academic work leading to poor performance. Professor Maso (interview 2014) explained that the

availability and use of teaching and learning materials affect the lecturer's motivation and the effectiveness of their lessons as well. The effectiveness of a teacher's lesson may determine an improved academic performance. Teaching and learning materials stimulate ideas and provide enjoyment of lessons. According to Loveness (interview 2014), a student studying for a degree in History, lessons are lively when the lecturer uses visuals or pictures. The grasping and understanding of the major concepts become easier. Doctor Maramba (interview 2014) explained that a lecturer is only able to use teaching and learning aids if he or she is highly motivated. If teachers or lecturers are motivated they are able to create a learning and teaching environment. Mr. Dube (interview 2014), a lecturer at Gweru polytechnic college, explained that a motivated lecturer or teacher will establish a productive classroom atmosphere by means of good organization and carefully planned teaching structures. In addition, a motivated teacher shows his or her enthusiasm for their work by planning their lectures and the use of interactive teaching methods which will involve everyone. For Professor Maso (interview 2014), competence often transforms into high quality teaching with the expectation that this would influence the learning of students. Motivated lecturers exhibit their enthusiasm for their work by giving prompt feedback to the students, dealing with students' problems effectively and creating a conducive climate setting for different lessons making sure that students understood and coped with the amount of knowledge given to them.

Mrs. Muzenda (interview 2014), a lecturer at a polytechnic college also pointed out that methods used by lecturers do play an important role in the performance of students. She is of the opinion that through the interactive methods used, lessons become more alive, making the understanding and grouping of major concepts easier. The overall use of a variety of media for learning increases the probability that students would learn more and retain better, what they learn. This enables students to improve their performance on skills that they are expected to develop.

To that extent, universities should ensure that lecturers are highly motivated. When universities or colleges fail to provide lecturers with all the requisite materials for the job, this may result in frustration. The spill over effect may be inefficiency and underperformance by both lecturers and students. Ferranti (1968) observed that this normally happens when the employer expects the employee to complete the job on schedule and with perfection, in spite of the unavailability of teaching and learning materials. Therefore the availability and use of materials motivates and affects the effectiveness of lecturers' lessons, enhancing the tentative memory of students, hence improving academic performance.

The effectiveness of the teacher in transmitting knowledge also contributes to the performance of students to a certain extent. According to Asamoah (2009) in any educational system, the academic performance of students is dependent to a large extent on the quality of the lecturer or teacher, his teaching methods and the class size. Ferranti (1968) is of the opinion that since lecturers are pivotal to the transmission of knowledge, they should effectively learn how to apply all the teaching principles and methods that make lecturers professional and competent enough to impart knowledge in their given fields. From the discussions held with students it emerged that lecturers must speak clearly enough. If a lecturer is unable to assume responsibilities or is not good, this can cause students to fail. Students explained that some of their lecturers are not competent enough. They have a certain inability to talk which makes it difficult for them to explain certain concepts. Questionnaires given out to students indicated that 75 % did not think learning was fun. 80% of the students pointed out those lecturers did not know how to teach that is why they failed. They explained that lecturers presented their lessons in only one style and lacked a variety of techniques to make students understand. Another 86 % indicated that lecturer just gave out notes without explaining them. So attending lecturers was a waste of time. From the above discussion it is clear that lecturers also play a role in the underperformance of students at institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe. From the same research, these researchers also observed that students also contributed to their own down fall to a larger extent.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this paper we have attempted to show that underperformance among students in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe is a result of many factors. These factors were placed in two categories, those which are lecturer related and those which are student oriented. Interviews and discussions conducted indicated that teacher commitment, large classes, motivation and failure to have tutorials by universities contribute to student poor performance. On the same note, student laziness, lack of time management, bad study habits, wider social networks, drinking and failure to adjust to university educational standards among other things contribute to poor performance by students.

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### **Interviews**

Interview with Mr.Antony Sibanda, Lecturer, Masvingo, 8 January 2014.

Interview with Mrs D.M King Lecturer, Gweru, 12 January 2014.

Interview with Mr.G Tarugarira, Lecturer, Gweru 16 January 2014.

Interview with Mr.D Ncube, Lecturer, Gweru, 4 February 2014.

Interview with Tafadzwa Mazoyo, Student, Gweru, 21 February 2014.

Interview with Prof, Simon Maso, Chinhoyi, 20 January 2014.

Interview with Loveness Mharira, Student, Gweru, 21 February 2014.

Interview with Ian Maramba, Chinhoi, 20 January 2014.

Interview with James Dube, Lecturer, Gweru Polytechnic, Gweru, 15 February 2014.

Interview with Febby Muzenda, Lecturer, Gweru Polytechnic, Gweru, 15 February 2014.

Interview with Tendai Matsvimbo, Lecturer, Masvingo, 8 January 2014.

Interview with Emma Moyo, Student, Gweru, 21 February 2014.

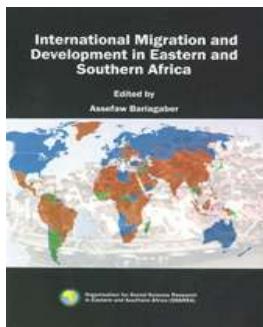
### **Focus Group Discussions**

Focus Group Discussion 1 with Students at National University of Science and Technology, Bulawayo, 25 February 2014.

Focus Group Discussion 11 with Students at Gweru Polytechnic 16 February 2014.

Focus Group Discussion 111 with Students of Midlands State University, Gweru, 18 February 2014.

## New Publications



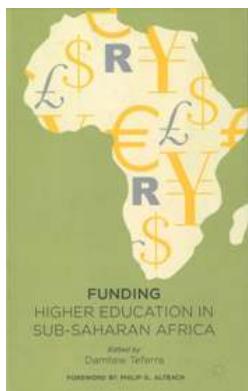
### **International Migration and Development in Eastern and Southern Africa**

Edited by  
Assefaw Bariagaber

Many authors see migration as an integral element of livelihoods, as an adaptive strategy to income constraints, especially in low and middle-income countries. They also attest that it is closely interrelated to processes of social, economic and environmental change and transformation. And the role of remittances in the development of the migrant-sending countries is increasingly embraced by individuals and even governments in developing countries. Others, on the contrary, document the downside of migration, more importantly illicit international migration, considering the risks incurred to migrants and the productive labour and human capital lost to places of destination. The interface of international migration and development is thus one of the topical issues that warrant studies.

This anthology brings together outputs of researches on *International Migration and Development in Eastern and Southern Africa*, which were initiated and supported by OSSREA. It contains six chapters that deal with issues, nature, challenges, and opportunities of international migration; impacts of remittances on the economies of recipient individuals and countries in Eastern and Southern Africa; and policy options for making the interface between international migration and development more effective. The studies are on Botswana, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Sudan and they focus on the different aspects and issues of migration from these countries to South Sudan and the Gulf States. All the chapters have benefited from the technical editing/review done by Assefaw Bariagaber, a Professor of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University in the USA. The book is useful in informing policy, practice, teaching and research on international migration and development in Eastern and Southern Africa.

*Matebu Tadesse*  
*Editor, OSSREA*



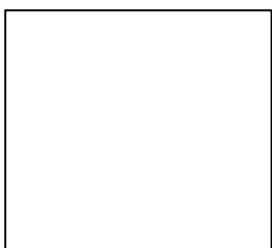
## Funding Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

*Damtew Teferra*

If one looks around the world, the region perhaps least served by relevant research literature and analysis of higher education is Sub-Saharan Africa. *Funding Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* addresses this gap. Drawing on in-depth, evidence-based research from nine countries including Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, this volume sets out a comprehensive analysis of financing patterns currently being adopted by institutions across Eastern and Southern Africa to help accommodate the rapidly growing number of enrolments and massification of education. This book makes an impressive contribution to two key areas of Africa's higher education development: a better understanding of patterns of funding and the need to improve deeper research on African higher education.



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**A Report on OSSREA's Responses to Africa's Challenges of Change**

**Proceedings of the OSSREA 11<sup>th</sup> Congress 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013,  
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## The East African Community Integration Process and Economic Growth of Member Countries

Augustus S. Mulvihill

# Knowledge Acquisition and Diffusion in Small-Firm Clusters in Zimbabwe: A Complexity Theory Approach

Godfrey Muponda

## **Child Work and Schooling in Butajira and its Vicinity: Beliefs and Practices**

Seleshi Zeleke and Mitiku Hambisa

## The Cost-Benefit Analysis of Fisheries Management Systems in Kenya: The Case of Lake Victoria

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## Contraceptive Use Among Women With HIV Infection Attending Treatment and Care at Yirgalem Hospital, Southern Ethiopia

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