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Two Contrasting African Cases *Kenya and Zimbabwe*

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KENYA

The universities of Kenya and foreign student intake

Kenya has four fully-fledged public universities and two university colleges to cater for the demands for higher education in the country. These are:

- The University of Nairobi
- Moi University, Eldoret
- Kenyatta University
- Egerton University
- Jomo Kenyatta University College
- Maseno University College

There is also a growing number of private universities in the country. Overall enrolment in all six public institutions is approximately 40,000, of which 14,555 are at the University of Nairobi and 9,890 are at Kenyatta University. These two institutions also account for nearly all the postgraduate population.

Kenya hosts many overseas students in both her public and private universities. Data presented here is from the two major public universities, Nairobi and Kenyatta, and from two private institutions, Daystar University College and the United States International University – Africa (USIU).

In 1991, there were 466 students from abroad studying at these four institutions. They came from 53 different countries. Just over 40 per cent were from Kenya's neighbours: Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The total from post-industrial countries was 138, of which 66 per cent were from the USA. There are very few students from the rich countries of the Commonwealth. Almost two-thirds of foreign students were undergraduates and most of them were at the private universities, due to limitations of space at the public ones.

Exchange programmes

Tables 11.1 and 11.2 at the end of the chapter show the participants in exchange programmes at Nairobi and Kenyatta Universities respectively. They show that there are no student exchanges with Commonwealth countries.

Practically all the exchange students at the two universities are Americans. All the students are undergraduates, usually in their second or third years, who come to Nairobi on a one-year exchange and return to their respective universities to complete their degrees. The largest number of students is from the University of California, with which the University of Nairobi has had an exchange programme for a long time. Kenyatta University has very few exchange students compared to Nairobi (Moi University does not have any exchange programmes). Unlike at the University of Nairobi, the exchange programme at Kenyatta is not directly with specific universities, but is through the International Students Exchange Programme which incorporates several US universities. Most of the students study Arts subjects, usually with an Africa focus, for example, African history, African political systems, African literature, African philosophy and Kiswahili. A few take up science subjects like Agriculture, Biology and Zoology. The credits earned by the students at Nairobi are usually recognised by their respective universities.

Daystar University College has an exchange programme with American colleges and universities through the American Consortium of Christian Universities and Colleges. However, the US International University does not have any exchange schemes. The main courses offered at Daystar include Business Administration, Communications, Education and Bible Studies, while the USIU offers mainly Business Administration, International Business Administration and Psychology.

Postgraduate students come under a variety of different sponsorships, such as the German Academic Exchange Service, the Common-

wealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and British aid schemes administered by the British Council. Some are funded by their home government. At the University of Nairobi, the majority come to study at Master's level and two-thirds of them come from the five neighbouring countries of Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Somalia. Only eight per cent of foreign postgraduates come from the post-industrial countries.

The main discipline of study at Master's level is Medicine (36 per cent), followed by Agriculture, Engineering and Business Administration. The Diplomacy training programme at the University is highly regarded internationally and a large number of students enrol. As mentioned already, the University of Nairobi has the largest proportion of postgraduate students in the country and virtually all the foreign postgraduates are found here. Kenyatta University has very few foreign postgraduates (under five) while Moi and Egerton Universities do not appear to have any.

Some exchange schemes

The University of Nairobi has several link and exchange programmes with foreign institutions, ranging from direct exchange of students to links which facilitate institutional capacity building. Such programmes have been established on the premise that higher education should have an international dimension and that academic interchange facilitates cross-cultural exchange of knowledge and ideas and promotes understanding. The major schemes operating at the university are described below.

- 1 *Student exchange* This involves a direct exchange of students between universities. The University of Nairobi has exchange programmes with four American universities, namely the University of California, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Massachusetts and Kalamazoo Undergraduate College, and also with Soka University in Japan. (It should be pointed out that Kenyatta University has a similar scheme with US universities through the International Student Exchange Programme – ISEP – in Washington.) Of these, the oldest and most effective programme has been with campuses of the University of California, having started during the 1960s. The exchange with

Penn State and Massachusetts is over five years old and that with Soka University dates from 1988.

According to the agreements with the American universities the main features of the schemes are:

- 1 The exchange is between undergraduate students from the American universities and postgraduates from University of Nairobi. The number of students participating in the exchange is stated in the agreements.
- 2 The American students enrol for courses they have selected in consultation with their academic advisors for a period of one academic year (equivalent to two semesters). The same applies to Nairobi. Participating students have to be selected by their respective institutions and have to meet the admissions requirements of the host institutions.
- 3 The US students are given recognised credits for the courses taken and these are credited to their degree when they return to complete their studies.
- 4 The foreign students normally take courses in Anthropology, Sociology, Kiswahili, History/Archaeology, Economics and any other courses with an African focus.
- 5 Each host institution absorbs all tuition, registration and any other education fees for the guest students enrolled. In other words, tuition fees for each student are waived by the respective universities. However, because of the high fees charged to foreign students at American universities, while Nairobi charges much lower fees, the exchange has not been equitable, particularly with the University of California. For example the ratio was eight undergraduates to one postgraduate. But the new agreements with Penn State and Massachusetts are more equitable.
- 6 The University of Nairobi provides accommodation in the University Halls of Residence for the American students. The Nairobi students have to look for adequate accommodation which they pay for from their maintenance stipends.
- 7 All participating students are responsible for their travel and personal expenses including health and medical insurance.
- 8 The University of California provides one member of the faculty to serve as liaison officer of the programme and as a teaching member of the faculty of the University of Nairobi. Nairobi provides housing and other staff benefits for the Liaison Professor.

The resident Liaison Professor looks after the welfare of the American exchange students. There is no equivalent counterpart from Nairobi at the University of California.

The agreement with Soka University has similar features, except that, besides waiving tuition, Soka also provides the airfare and accommodation for students from Nairobi.

Institutional links Besides the student exchange programmes, the University of Nairobi has established numerous institutional links with various universities and organisations. These links are usually multi-purpose, involving capacity-building, staff exchange, research collaboration, etc, and are important for strengthening the university. They include:

Links for collaboration in research and teaching These are usually initiated at the departmental level and involve collaborative research activities, faculty exchange, donation of equipment and the training of staff and technicians. Often these links are not as vigorous and productive as exchange programmes between universities, since they are not centrally controlled and need a lot of commitment on the part of the departments. Departments in the University of Nairobi have such links with counterparts in Canada, Britain, Europe, America and Israel.

Links with foreign national organisations or parastatal agencies, for example, German Academic Exchange, SASAKAWA (Japan). These provide financial support, particularly in the form of scholarships to staff and graduate students. The link with the German agency (known as DAAD) has several components; it gives scholarships to Kenyan students to pursue graduate studies locally; it provides fellowships for short-term study in Germany enabling students to pursue split-site Ph.D. degrees; it includes possibility of exchange of faculty members between Nairobi and Germany; and it has contributed to strengthening departments through supplying equipment, training personnel and providing academic staff. According to the Academic Registrar, this is seen as a very successful and beneficial link.

Bilateral agreements directly with governments, mainly of developing countries Graduate students from these countries come for training in Diplomacy, Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture and Population Studies, and Nairobi can send students to these countries. The funding is between governments and comes to the University through the Ministry.

Affiliations These involve links with a consortium of universities (mainly American) which come together for research purposes. It

benefits staff in terms of research, publications and dissemination of ideas.

Exchanges are also organised through *international multilateral agencies* like the World Bank, World Health Organisation (WHO), International Atomic Energy Agency, World Meteorological Organisation, etc. Such organisations sponsor graduate students especially from African countries, fund training of staff and technicians for short-term courses, sponsor staff to attend conferences, thus helping towards capacity building in institutions. One example of this is the Diplomacy Training Centre at the University already mentioned.

It must be pointed out that regional links and exchanges between African countries are weaker than previously. The Inter University Council for East Africa covers student and staff exchange. In the past there was a strong reciprocal exchange between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Also, through the Association of African Universities, the University of Nairobi had agreements with several African universities namely, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Swaziland, whereby their students were trained at the university in Medicine, Dental Surgery, Engineering and Agriculture. When, however, the issue of reciprocity was raised, there were problems and the programmes could not continue. Moreover, with regard to enhancing regional exchange, many of the African universities do not have the resources or the infrastructure to accommodate students from outside. Also, there is the problem of instability in some of the countries. It is unlikely that students from Kenya would find it attractive to study under such conditions. There are exchanges with African countries, for example the University of Burundi has been sending students to study Veterinary Medicine and Kiswahili, while Kenyan students go to study French. But there are no strong exchange programmes with African countries.

The student exchange schemes with the American universities are successful, although some problems need to be streamlined. Of the American programmes, the one with Pennsylvania State University is the most successful because:

- 1 There is reciprocity in terms of overcoming inherent weakness. For example, Penn State does not have a very strong African studies programme while Nairobi needs strong graduate American students and postgraduate Kenyan students which gives maximum relative advantage to each institution.
- 2 There is waiver of tuition and accommodation costs on both sides. This helps overcome the high costs of education and foreign

exchange problems for Kenyan students.

- 3 The exchange students are very carefully selected high performers from each institution, which ensures that standards are maintained.
- 4 There is credit recognition, which is of great concern to students. The American students get credit for the courses done in Nairobi, which are recognised for their degrees, while Kenyan students get degrees from a recognised American university.
- 5 Pennsylvania has been able to solicit for funds in good time. It is able to do this because of projecting ahead of time and budgeting fully.
- 6 There is well-established communication between the two institutions so that each knows the financial position with regard to students.
- 7 The University of Nairobi students are offered teaching assistantship which is highly beneficial financially and in terms of staff development and exposure for the students.
- 8 The programme is reciprocal and mutually beneficial to both partners.

As mentioned previously, the scheme with DAAD is also highly successful. This is because:

- 1 It is a well consolidated and institutionalised programme.
- 2 It has been consistent in managing the programme in its long term objectives which are clearly stated and beneficial to the University and in following up the progress of those being trained.
- 3 It is very specific in the fields of study it sponsors, mainly developed oriented studies.
- 4 The scholarships offered are substantial taking into account the high costs of education and economic impediments in developing countries.
- 5 It has contributed to capacity building through training a large number of people locally in relevant fields, as well as giving exposure to overseas training. German students are also able to train at Nairobi on DAAD scholarships.

Viable models of academic exchange

The descriptions above demonstrate the commitment of the universities and government of Kenya to the principle of internationalisation in

education. The University of Nairobi and its peers believe that universities must have the maximum international exposure through:

- 1 Interaction at academic staff level through : (a) staff exchange quota, having inter-staff training programmes and (b) through conferences which provide a good forum for the exchange of ideas, research and learning and promote knowledge. The importance Kenya attaches to this component is manifested by the existence of the Dean's Committee at the university which is funded by the Treasury at the sum of £600,000 per annum. This committee approves and gives grants to scholars for the main purpose of attending conferences and for research.
- 2 Student exchanges in order to broaden and diversify classroom contacts and enable students from different cultural contexts to live together, thus creating friendship and understanding. Since knowledge is universal, exchange programmes benefit students especially through exploiting the relative advantages of each institution. For example, Kenya can offer training in development anthropology and African studies to students from western countries which, in turn, are strong in technological training needed by Kenyan students. Thus, academic exchange can be mutually beneficial to all partners and is very valuable.

They are aware of Kenya's particular advantages for attracting foreign students, its agreeable environment, and reputation for economic and political stability, institutional strengths such as a handful of unique courses (for example the Diplomacy training) and the long experience of the University of Nairobi in particular in administering exchange programmes. They are also well aware of the needs for strengthening capacity and support structures.

Any academic exchange scheme between two institutions should be equitable and mutually beneficial to both parties. Academic exchange implies cross-personalisation between two countries where students and staff are moving for technological, socio-economic and cultural exposure. It is of necessity two-sided. It is however clear from the report that there are no student exchange schemes between Kenya and other Commonwealth countries. The movement of students is one-way, namely, from Kenya to mainly the industrialised countries like Britain and Canada. It is equally important for students from these countries to get exposure to the socio-economic problems of Third World countries.

The experience of the University of Nairobi with academic exchange

schemes has shown that the 'California Model,' that is, the model used with the American universities, has proved extremely viable. The features that make the 'California model' a viable one are:

It saves on foreign exchange It is well established that the prohibitive education and living costs in western countries, together with foreign exchange difficulties make it almost impossible for Kenyan students to study abroad. However, the barter system of the 'Californian model', where an agreed number of students from each university are exchanged, makes the scheme highly feasible. When tuition and accommodation are waived, the costs, particularly for Kenyan students, are greatly reduced.

Reciprocity The traffic flow is two-way so that American students coming to Kenya benefit as much as Kenyan students going to America, from the exposure they get. Besides, they get recognised credits for the courses they take.

Maximum relative advantage The American students at the undergraduate level get training in African studies and other programmes in which the University of Nairobi is strong, while Kenyan students benefit from the strong graduate programmes and technological exposure in American universities.

The model is therefore reciprocal and mutually beneficial to both partners. Such a model of academic exchange is recommended for an interchange of students between the University of Nairobi and other Commonwealth countries and also for institutions elsewhere in the Commonwealth to take up and develop according to their own circumstances.

ZIMBABWE

A late start

The University of Zimbabwe is relatively young (originating in 1955) and has had problems in evolving international connections owing to a period of isolation before the country's independence in 1980. This means that it has not had the opportunity to form the strong external relationships over a time-span of decades as has the University of Nairobi (which is no older). It had, in the past, to maintain other principles of universality. Right from its inception, the University was committed to being a non-racial institution in a country where for years racial policies were the basis of the governance and administration of the state. It may thus seem a late starter on the international university

scene, but it has never deviated from the fundamental concepts of the universality of knowledge and of equality of access to it.

Since independence in 1980, it has been able to develop in a number of ways. From the University of Rhodesia, it became the University of Zimbabwe and the Faculties of Agriculture and of Commerce and Law were established to join the existing ones of Arts, Science and Social Studies. The Royal Charter was replaced in 1982 and in that same year, the Faculty of Veterinary Science was established with an intake of eighteen students. In 1988, the Faculty of Commerce and Law was split into two distinct Faculties, namely, the Faculty of Commerce and the Faculty of Law. Now, the University of Zimbabwe has ten faculties on one campus. Student enrolment increased from 68 in 1957 to 2,240 in 1980 and 9,300 in 1990. Now the student population is over 10,000. As of 31st December 1990 the University of Zimbabwe had 725 members of staff. It is at present finding it difficult to retain old staff and to attract new staff locally or abroad due to deteriorating conditions of work and competition from neighbouring universities. Staff shortages have a negative impact on the number of programmes that can be offered every year at the local university.

Perhaps this rapid expansion at a time of staff shortage has shaped Zimbabwe's rather different approach to the reception of foreign students and has led it to an interest in links where the student exchange component is played down.

National and institutional policy on foreign students

At the national level, Zimbabwe does not yet have a well-articulated policy on the admission of foreign nationals from overseas or from elsewhere in Africa. The Ministry of Higher Education, which should initiate such a policy has not been able to do so because of the existence of the separate Ministry of National Scholarships which co-ordinates all external studies. The Ministry of National Scholarships in the President's Office, in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, co-ordinates all scholarships for Zimbabweans to study abroad, student flows from abroad or the neighbouring countries. For such activities, it acts as a clearing house even for foreign scholars who either visit Zimbabwe as researchers or scholars teaching at local institutions.

As a member of various international organisations such as the Commonwealth, the Organisation of African Unity, the Non-aligned Movement and the Southern African Co-ordinating Conference

(SADCC) the Government of Zimbabwe accepts a small number of foreign nationals at these institutions of higher learning. To facilitate this co-operation, Zimbabwe has entered into a number of Cultural Exchange programmes with Commonwealth countries, (especially Australia and Canada), European Countries (especially the former Eastern Bloc) and a few Asian and African countries. As articulated by a senior official in the Ministry of Higher Education, Zimbabwe cannot afford to send its students abroad on cultural exchange programmes using its own scarce foreign reserves. Consequently there are more students from North America and Europe who study in Zimbabwe each year than there are Zimbabweans going abroad on government sponsorship. As such, more foreigners come to Zimbabwe than would be desirable from the Government's point of view in terms of maintaining a balance.

The major tertiary institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe which attract a limited number of foreign students are:

- The University of Zimbabwe – degree and non degree programmes
- Ranch House College – short non degree programme
- Agricultural Colleges – non degree programmes
- The Harare and Bulawayo Polytechnics – non degree programmes
- Mutare Forestry College – non degree programmes
- Teachers' Colleges – non degree programmes

A few institutions in the private sector now offer short courses for students from neighbouring countries especially in the area of information processing and data capture. A few government departments such as Immigration, Education, Foreign Affairs, the Police, offer short courses to public servants from the neighbouring countries. Such training courses are usually the results of bilateral agreements between Zimbabwe and countries in the SADCC. Such programmes are at times financed by donor agencies such as ODA, SIDA or USAID. Mozambique and Namibia have benefited from such schemes, which have been financed by an outside donor for civil servants and officials from Eduardo Mondlane University.

The University of Zimbabwe has by far the largest number of foreign students, but because of the demand for university education from Zimbabweans, it can only offer relatively few places to foreign nationals. The general policy of the University is that it considers applications from foreign students, and may offer them admission if they

fulfil the entry requirements and provided that their admission will not deny a place to an eligible Zimbabwean applicant. In exceptional cases, where a suitably qualified foreign student applies for admission to a programme which is fully subscribed with Zimbabwean applicants, the University will seek a directive from the Ministry of Higher Education and may accept such an applicant if his/her application is endorsed from a Government to Government level. Foreign students who are admitted to the University of Zimbabwe pay double the tuition fees payable by the Zimbabweans. Tuition fees range from US\$140 per annum in Arts, Law and education to US\$560 in the Faculty of Medicine for full-time students. Residence fees range from US\$160 per annum to US\$600 in student housing provided by the university on campus or in flats rented by the University. All students pay similar residential fees for types of accommodation.

Linkages with foreign universities

During the 1990–91 academic year, a number of departments at the University of Zimbabwe had links with universities in the United Kingdom, Canada, the USA, Europe and Africa. Apart from staff exchanges, these links are critical in staff development for staff from the University of Zimbabwe. The foreign university may also get an opportunity to send some of its students (if it should wish), especially at the graduate level, to spend some time at the University of Zimbabwe, conducting research in the country or even teaching. Foreign universities are also being used by University of Zimbabwe staff for their academic contacts for periods ranging from one month to a year. These contacts are regarded as essential in giving university staff an opportunity to avail themselves of current literature and developments in their academic fields. Such contacts constitute a major flow for staff from the University of Zimbabwe to other countries. A few University of Zimbabwe staff members get an opportunity to teach at foreign universities, but the majority of the staff who go on 'contact' or sabbatical leave abroad utilise that period for research.

The major links and contacts are listed in the Vice-Chancellor's annual report.

In 1990–91, he listed the following:

- **UK** 21 links, involving 16 institutions, all of them facilitated through the British Council
- **Canada** six links, involving four institutions, facilitated by CIDA

- **Mainland Europe** 17 links, involving eight institutions, facilitated through the European Community
- **USA** 21 links, involving eight institutions, facilitated through USIS
- **Africa** four links, involving four institutions (no facilitator named)

It is quite clear that South-South co-operation is almost non-existent compared to the kind of linkages that exist between the University and universities from industrialised countries. This imbalance worries some lecturers and officials interviewed who fear that such relationships perpetuate intellectual dependency of the University on knowledge forms based on Western cultural traditions. This view was very prevalent among the younger members of staff in both the Humanities and the Sciences. At the government level, the Ministry of Higher Education came out strongly about their opposition to what one official terms the 'intellectual dependence of our university towards the North'.

The Research Council of Zimbabwe which processes research applications from foreign scholars also indicated that they get fewer applications from students and scholars from universities in developing nations. The bulk of their applications come from students and academics in the developed countries. However, there was a general agreement that there is reluctance on the part of universities from industrialised countries to initiate these kinds of linkages.

As far as increasing linkages is concerned, the major problems for the majority of the faculties at the University of Zimbabwe as revealed by those interviewed is the degree of flexibility in the type of courses offered and the availability of staff who can supervise students from other countries. The availability of donor funding also poses a major constraint for departments that would like to establish links especially with African universities. There are very few donors who are willing to finance linkages with the University of Zimbabwe, because of the general trend based on the view that social rate of returns to higher education are lower than the social rate of returns to primary and secondary education (see World Bank 1988). The situation is even exacerbated by the current Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which has been heavily influenced by the World Bank. Fewer financial resources have been allocated to the tertiary education sector by Government. This is a frustrating situation because most departments are eager to establish South-South linkages, so as to tackle similar problems within the higher education sector.

The institutional capacity of the entire University as far as student accommodation, know-how among administrators, laboratory facilities and the availability of reading materials in the small library that exists at the University of Zimbabwe is very limited. The situation is compounded by a diminishing financial base.

Not surprisingly, against this background, the number of foreign students admitted is quite small compared to Kenya and other countries discussed in this book.

Attitudes of university administrators towards student exchange

In spite of all the difficulties, university and government officials were unanimous in their views on academic exchange at both the student and staff levels. On a very mundane level, staff at the University of Zimbabwe support the current linkage programmes because these have become an important source of equipment that the departments are unable to pay for themselves. On the teaching side, departments of faculties also use these linkages to develop their programmes with temporary foreign staff while their Zimbabwean colleagues are developing themselves at the foreign university, for example, those without doctorates may complete their degree. The Faculties of Veterinary Science, Medicine and Agriculture are good examples of how a university in the South can benefit from such linkages. The Faculty of Veterinary Science has been receiving Z\$0.5 million annually since 1986 for student/staff exchange and Z\$25 million for staff exchanges with Dutch universities. Final year Clinical Veterinary Science students spend six to ten weeks at a Dutch university. The Faculties of Agriculture and Medicine continue to get substantial aid from Michigan State University. A further example is the Department of Economics which has support from SIDA to establish long-term relationships with Swedish universities for staff development and purchase of equipment. No students are, however, involved.

With a few exceptions such as the arrangement whereby students of French spend some time in France, students do not seem to be benefiting from these links. Staff benefit because links provide them with the chance to spend time at foreign universities, conducting research and interacting with colleagues in their academic field. Observably students from the foreign universities may also benefit, since they can afford Zimbabwe fees and also get credit for a year spent at the University.

Conclusion

Zimbabwe seems to be in a particularly difficult position compared to most of the other countries discussed in this book. It has a small capacity to absorb foreign students because it cannot cope with the demand for tertiary education. There is also a sense that the real need is more opportunities for Zimbabwean students.

If the country is to play an important role in academic exchange with other countries, it needs assistance in building its institutional capacity.

TABLE 11.1 Exchange programme students at the University of Nairobi by country, institution and discipline, 1988-91

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Country/Distribution</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>		
		<i>Arts</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Total</i>
1988-89	USA			
	Pennsylvania State U.	2	1	3
	U. of Massachusetts	5	0	5
	U. of California	14	3	17
1989-90	USA			
	Pennsylvania State U.	2	2	4
	U. of Massachusetts	7	0	7
	U. of California	14	6	20
	Kalamazoo College	4	04	
1990-91	USA			
	Pennsylvania State U.	4	3	7
	U. of Massachusetts	8	1	9
	U. of California	16	6	22
	Kalamazoo College	8	0	8
	JAPAN			
	Soka University	1	0	1
	TOTAL	85	22	107

Source: Admissions Dept, University of Nairobi

TABLE 11.2 Exchange programme students at Kenyatta University by institution 1988–91

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Institution (all USA)</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>
1988–98	U. of Mississippi	1
	Wittenberg U.	1
	Old Dominion U.	1
	U. of Idaho	1
1989–90	Miami University, Ohio	1
	Western Washington U.	1
	U. of South Carolina	1
1990–91	U. of Pennsylvania	1
	Howard Univ.	1
	Ball State U.	1
	Appalachian State U.	1
	TOTAL	12

Source: Assistant Registrar's Office, Kenyatta University