



The International Deans' Course: Personal Reflections

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Outline

1. An African context for the IDC
2. The IDC: curriculum, testimonials and spread
3. Participant-Trainer Perceptions of the IDC
4. The Project Action Plan (PAP)
5. PAP and strengthening universities, enhancing capacities: a view from rankings
6. Conclusion

1. African universities around 2007: a snapshot

- Expansion of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
 - Kenya: pre-2000, 10 universities; post-2000, over 20 universities; establishment in 2007 alone of 15 constituent university colleges
 - Nigeria: about 35 pre-2000 universities; in 2005 alone 15 new universities established. Currently (November 2011): 117 universities
 - Ethiopia: about 2000, the one pre-existing univ. gave birth to 6 new univs; in 2006/7, 13 universities established; additional 10 universities established in 2011
- HEI – State Relations
 - Tense relations over national political issues, funding; industrial actions
- HE management
 - Externalising responsibility for failures, inefficiencies; intense suspicion of HE reform discourse
 - Thinning out of expertise/experience
 - Vicious cycle: crushing workload, no time to reflect on innovation or re-engineering of work processes
 - Office-holding as ritual; little recognition of room for bottom-up innovation

2. Enter, the pioneer IDC, May 2007!

- 10 modules, including:
 - Quality: integral part of conception, rather than an after-thought add-on; multi-faceted/life-cycle view
 - Strategic management: decision-making within a goal context, especially in response to centrifugal forces/contradictions
 - Bologna: comparability/readability of qualifications/credits; promotion of mobility, restructuring of HE cycles, creating a European HE brand and research area
 - Financial management: funding of functions (teaching, research), modes (input-, output-based), competitive mechanisms, allocation mechanisms (line-item, block funding)
 - Modes of governance as different weightings of each of the following five dimensions of the exercise of power: state regulation, academic self-governance, stakeholder guidance, management, competition
 - Soft skills: meeting management, conflict management, presentation skills

2. Testimonial (1)

- **Eunice Kamara (2011) mergers, student assessments and performance contracting at Moi University, Kenya**

We conspired to resist and sabotage the proposed change. At the same time that these departmental and school mergers were being proposed, information got to us that there was going to be introduction of performance contracts. (...) We (mis)understood this to mean that performance contracting was about determining who among the academic staff performs the lowest so they would be laid off. Indeed, before we could even sign the contracts, the idea of student assessment of staff came up. (...) [A] series of meetings of the University Academic Staff Union (UASU) were called to deliberate on the proposed changes to university operations. I personally attended all the meetings and was vocal on the need to resist this change. UASU resolved that nobody was going to sign the performance contracts or implement the student assessment and that departmental meetings would be held to resist mergers.

The turning point came when I got the privilege of participating in the International Deans' Course (IDC). (...). It was in the course of this training that I came to clearly understand what the changes in my university were, where they were coming from, what they were intended for and why they were necessary. This was for this writer an eye opener [...].”

2. Testimonial (2)

- **Bassey Antia (2009) on the Nigerian relevance of the IDC**

“The dominant discourse into which generations of Nigerian academics have been socialised is one of the state undermining higher education. While evidence for the assertion can be found, this discourse tenor has the disadvantage of concealing the role played by competences, processes and structures internal to the higher education system in bringing about a state of affairs deplored by all.

The German initiative in higher education management described in this paper has the merit of providing the basis for thinking about not only the role that the state and higher education operators play in the present and future of the system. It also offers a discourse model that introduces new rationalities and temperaments into the higher education debate, and that is capable of redefining the terms of engagement by the various stakeholders”.

3. Perceptions of IDC (1)

- Just another course in one's career
 - A welcome break from the tedium of daily work
 - An opportunity for socialising and networking
- A course useful for the next job interview in HE; to answer questions such as:
 - What unique credentials do you have for the position sought?
 - What is your style of leadership?
 - How would you deal with conflict?
 - What is your vision for X and how would you attain it?

3. Perceptions of IDC (2)

- A management course that offers a new perspective to one's own research
 - Antia, B.E. (2008). Vision and Terminology Policy. *eDITION Terminologiemagazin* (Specialised Journal of the German Terminology Society), 1/2008, 10-13.
 - Antia, B.E. (2009). Corpora and Technology: Opportunities and Strategic Options for Nigerian Higher Education. In: E. Urua, M. Ekpenyong & F. Ahoua (eds.) *Language Development Beyond Borders: a Festschrift in honour of Professor Dr. Dafydd Gibbon*. Uyo: Emsel Groups, 79-107.
- and encourages some academic engagement with HE matters
 - Antia, B.E. (2008). The Georg Forster Scholarship as a Strategic Instrument in Support of Knowledge and Development. *Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Discussion Paper* no.13/2008, 35-38. http://www.humboldt-foundation.de/pls/web/docs/F4615/wissen_schafft_entwicklung.pdf
 - Antia, B.E. (2009). A German Initiative in Higher Education Management and Nigerian Applications. In: S. Mayanja & R. Sonaiya (eds.) *Network Dialoguing and the Strengthening of Academic Exchange between German and West African Universities*. Vienna: Boersedruck Publishers, 57-65.
 - Antia, B.E. (2009). Academic Cooperation between German and Nigerian Universities: A Case Study from the University of Maiduguri. In: S. Mayanja & R. Sonaiya (eds.) *Op.cit.*, 29-35.

3. Perceptions of IDC (3)

- Knowledge to be multiplied. Some Nigerian examples:
 - Humboldt-Kolleg on Quality and Good Governance in Higher Education Management, Abuja, 2009
 - Conference of the Association of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities, Osogbo, 2010.
 - Humboldt-Kolleg on Transparency Tools in Higher Education Management, Abuja, 2011

4. The Project Action Plan (PAP)

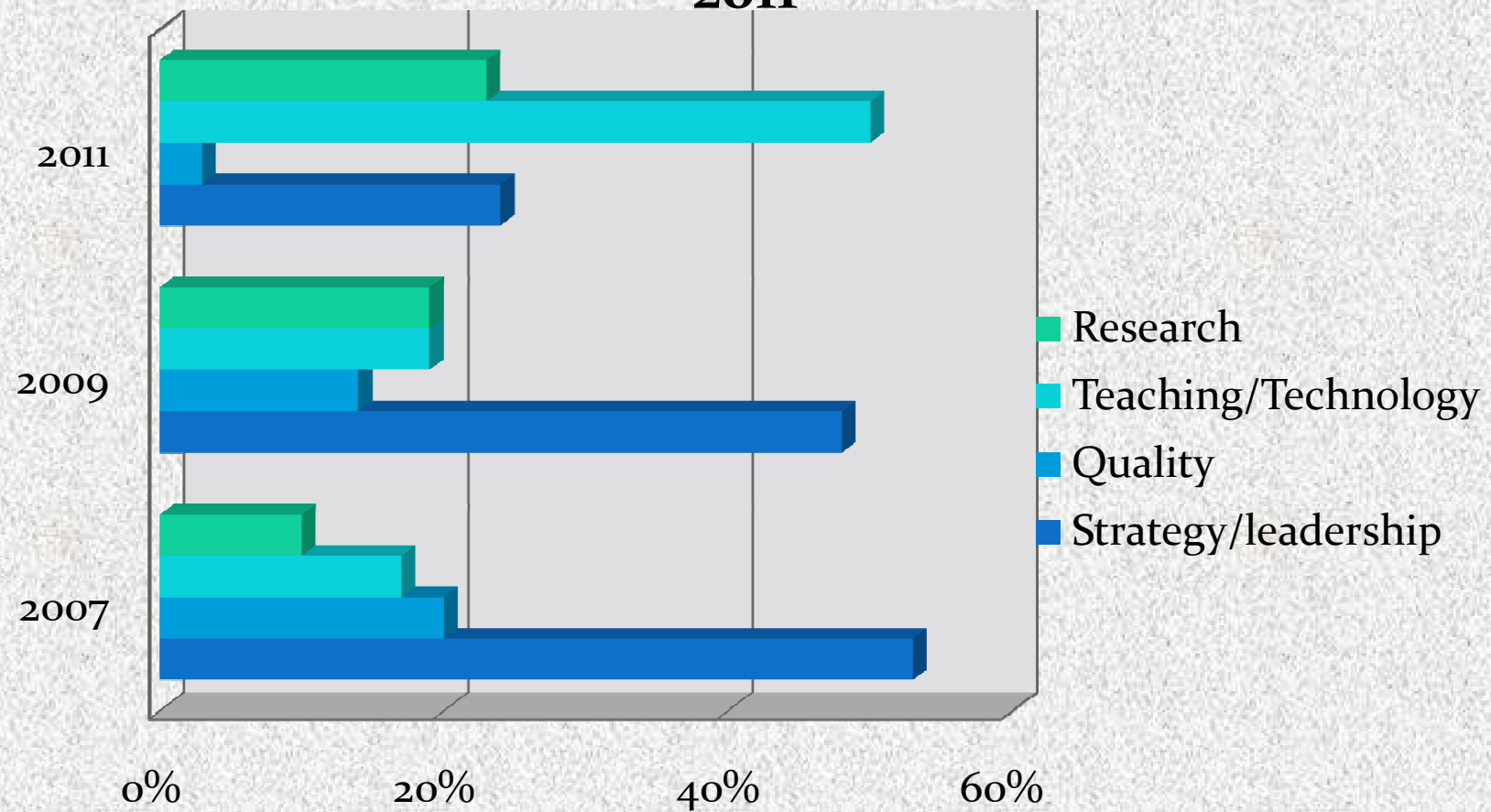
- Value-adding project to home institution
- Preferably within sphere of influence/authority
- But also exercise in project management
- Course-long mentoring
- Reporting obligations at second and third parts

Activities A	When	Where	Who?	Who else?	What support?	How to measure?
Milestone A						

4. Sample PAP Topics

- Income Generation Strategy in the Faculty of Language Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. Dr. Getahun Amare.
- Introducing Students' Assessment of Teaching in the University of Uyo, Nigeria. Prof. Eno-Abasi Urua.
- A five-year strategic plan for human resource (HR) development for the Faculty of Medicine at Gulu University, Uganda. Dr. Kaducu Felix Ocaka.
- Strategic Plan for School of Informatics, Dr. A. N. Mvuma, Dean, University of Dodoma, Tanzania.
- Setting a Departmental Research Agenda for the Department of English, Dr. Dora Edu-Buandoh, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
- Developing a teaching and research strategy for the Faculty of Science at JKVAT , Kenya. Dr. Hamadi Boga.
- **Implication: None of these existed prior to the IDC and the PAP!**

PAP Intervention Areas: IDC Africa 2007-2011



5. PAP and Strengthening Universities, Enhancing Capacities: A View from Ranking

- The Times Higher Education World University Rankings are based on 13 performance indicators collapsed under 5 headings:
 - Teaching — the learning environment (worth 30 per cent of the overall ranking score)
 - Research — volume, income and reputation (worth 30 per cent)
 - Citations — research influence (worth 30 per cent)
 - Industry income — innovation (worth 2.5 per cent)
 - International outlook — staff, students and research (worth 7.5 per cent).
- With the PAP intervention areas, the ground-work for better ranking being done.

6. Conclusion

- IDC as speed-training in HE management, offering a conceptual and terminological framework for making sense of the internal and external environment of the participant's HEI.
- IDC is broadening the pool from which quality HE leaders can be drawn; top-flight academics typically aloof now paying attention to the management of their HEIs.
- IDC is by many accounts a unique, integrated training package.
- PAP is a critical success factor of the IDC.
- Even while alternative business models and replication/ownership concepts are being discussed, IDC should continue to be seen as a strategically important project by its initiators, one that should continue to be sustained.
- Participants/institutions are grateful to DAAD-HRK DIES initiative



Thank you!