



**SPRING (*Spatial Planning
for Regions in Growing
Economies*)**

**Dr. Sam Afrane
Department of Planning
KNUST, Kumasi
Ghana**

Introduction

- **SPRING (*Spatial Planning for Regions in Growing Economies*)**

is an international training programme in development planning and management jointly organized by the KNUST, Kumasi and the University of Dortmund, Germany



Motivation/Rationale:



- Development Concerns in the developing world that necessitated the Programme:
- Over centralization and control of development activities and the exclusion of local communities from the planning process.
- Lack of balance between basic needs of local communities and broad national development goals and priorities.



- Outmoded developments planning concepts based on maximization of gross national product with little or no regard for the equitable distribution of growth and change in the quality of life the people, which is the actual meaning of development.
- Outmoded institutional framework and administrative structures for formulation and implementation of development policies.

Goal:

- To ensure a continuous supply of adequate and highly qualified development planners for Africa and other growing economies to enable them contribute to national development through dealing effectively with problems at the local level.

Take-off:

- The Programme started in 1984.



Structure of the Programme:



The first year in Dortmund focuses on theories, concepts, methods, techniques and general procedures of local development planning.

The second year in Kumasi focuses on practice oriented field studies, lectures, seminars and operational procedures within a specific cultural and political framework.

At the end of the two years, successful students are awarded the Master of Science degree in Development Planning and Management.



Over the last two decades, joint transcripts have been issued and signed by the authorities at KNUST and the University of Dortmund.

Programme Phases:



1. First, a 4-year **pilot phase** :
1985/86 - 1988/89
- 2. “consolidation phases”,
(1987 to 1993) were aimed at
a sustainable programme after
it has been properly
institutionalized between the
two universities.
- 3. The final consolidation
phase (1994 to 1996) aimed
at the long-term sustainability
of the programme and sought:

- To institutionalize involvement of alumni in marketing of SPRING

To develop a marketing strategy

To embark on aggressive marketing of SPRING in the region and in Europe

To pursue additional sources of income e.g. group consultancy, sponsored research, short-term training in and out of KNUST, and donations of equipment and facilities, books and library funds.

To enlarge the donor





- 4. The **fifth phase which spanned from October 1999 to September 2001**. The fifth phase focused principally on results that will ensure the financial sustainability of the programme at KNUST.
- An Evaluation of the consolidation phases brought out the following findings:
- SPRING graduates are doing well in the field
- KNUST had all that is required to be an equal partner with University of Dortmund
- Long-term scholarships for Ghanaian students for the first year in Dortmund have not yielded any positive results.

Recommendations:

- Establish a full two year (1st and 2nd year) programme at the KNUST, Kumasi, mainly for the Ghanaian students (from 2003) to be organized as part of the joint SPRING programme between KNUST and University of Dortmund.
- The first year course for non-Ghanaians is to be run parallel to Dortmund's based common course modules in order to ensure uniform content and quality.
- The second year programme will be run at the KNUST, Kumasi for both groups of students who have successfully passed the first year courses in Kumasi or Dortmund.



Latest Agreement:

- A memorandum of intent was signed by the University of Dortmund and the KNUST on the 31st October 2003 with the following key points:





- The exchange of staff, joint selection of candidates to the programme, joint approval of these topics, participation of partners in all examinations including theses and development workshops, evaluation of lecturers by students; and joint research and publication.
- The DAAD agreed with the Department of Planning to earmark up to 5 in-country scholarships of 2 year duration at KNUST (for Ghanaians only) each year for the Department's SPRING/KNUST programme activities.

Achievements:

1. From the humble beginnings in 1984, the programme has grown into partnerships in Asia and Latin America. The current partners of the programme are as follows:

- the Faculty of Spatial Planning, Universität Dortmund, Germany;
- the Department of Planning, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (DoP KNUST) in Kumasi, Ghana;





- the School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP), University of the Philippines, Quezon City, The Philippines;
- the University College of Lands and Architectural Studies (UCLAS), University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania;
- the Faculty of Economic and Environmental Sciences, Universidad Austral, Valdivia, Chile and
- the Centre of Environmental Sciences EULA, Universidad de Concepción, Chile.



Plans are advanced to establish another partnership in China

2. About 450 graduates from over 44 countries. Employed in leading positions in teaching and research, Regional Development and Urban Planning as well as in national ministries and in the development sector.



Challenges

- Understanding the procedures involved in managing a successful partnership
- Different socio-cultural contexts and work ethics
- How to sustain the programme through scholarships (which also means reducing the intake of Ghanaians)
- How to have access to the financial benefits of the programme

- Partnership has been more North-south, to the detriment of South-South Cooperation.
- SPRING's autonomy within the College structure?
- Having equal say in crucial matters regarding the administration of the project

Latest Agreement:

- A memorandum of intent was signed by the University of Dortmund and the KNUST on the 31st October 2003 with the following key points:





Lessons Learnt

- Partnerships of this nature are cost effective,
- Financial autonomy enables such programmes to take off successfully
- “Prime movers” are needed at both sides to enable the partnership start and be operated on a sustainable basis.
- Effective communication and goodwill among partners are key to the success of such programmes



Suggestions for future programmes/Way forward



- Partnership should thrive on confidence in each other,
- Both partners should explore to the full the provisions in agreements signed, as well as adhere to them.
- Some level of financial autonomy is required for take-off of such programmes within partner universities.
- Programmes should as much as possible respond to the development needs of the partner countries.



Thank you