CODESRIA

13ème
Assemblée générale
General Assembly
Assembleia Geral
الجمع العام الثالث عشر

L'Afrique et les défis du XXIème siècle
Africa and the Challenges of the Twenty First Century
A África e os desafios do Século XXI
إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

Strengthening African Higher Education and Research Systems through E-clustering

Abdul Karim Bangura
Howard University

5 - 9 / 12 / 2011

Rabat Maroc / Morocco

Abstract

One frequently reads and/or hears that in almost every African nation, there is dissatisfaction with the performance of the higher education system, comprising two types of institutions: (1) university level and (2) other institutions offering terminal degrees after three or four years of higher education. Universities and colleges are characterized by frequently failing administrations, incessant strikes, wage crises, poor standards, and student violence. Yet, when one looks at the great minds these educational institutions have produced and the abundant institutions and talents in the African Diaspora, one cannot help but ponder why these available resources have not been utilized maximally. Thus, a major question that emerges is the following: What can be done to help alleviate these problems in African higher education? This paper suggests E-clustering African and African-Diaspora institutions of higher education, scholars and researchers as one solution, since no one panacea can solve all of these problems. E-clustering African education will be an innovative approach for educational policy based on the concept known as "Cluster Building." E-cluster for African education will initiate the networking of all participants in a value-added chain. The objective is to bundle the potentials and competencies for increasing the innovation power and competitiveness of the partners in a cluster. Given Internet technology, African and African-Diaspora educational institutions, scholars and researchers can obtain a driving force. Internet technologies such as infrastructure, applications, platforms, and broadband can enable the educational and research processes among companies, academic institutions, research institutes and governments to be networked. E-education, E-business and E-government/E-administration cause fundamental structural changes of the private and public sectors. Given this reality, there is a need for an education, research and technology policy. This need is taken into account in E-clustering African education and research. The various nations in Africa and African-Diaspora communities in an E-education-research cluster can be networked by processes that are more standardized and so able to be supported by online applications. The E-education cluster will require a central infrastructure and services. Knowledge management, E-learning, E-marketplaces, personnel management and E-government/E-administration will be the main processes and services of this E-education-research cluster.