



International Knowledge Exchange Conference



International Interdisciplinary Knowledge Exchange Conference in London, UK

Organized by the co-editors from UK and Scandinavia of the Ethiopian
electronic Journal on Research and Innovation Foresight (Ee-JRIF)
which is part of the NES Global network)

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Abbey Conference Centre, London South Bank University



*Unlocking the Potential: The Challenges of
communicating and Exchanging Knowledge*

Knowledge Exchange Conference 2011 Organising Committee

- Dr Amare Desta (*Chair*)
- Mr Mentenot Mengesha (*Co-chair*)
- Prof. Mammo Muchie (*Director*)
- Mr Abiy Negussie (*Coordinator*)
- Mr Behailu Nekatebeb (*Coordinator*)
- Mr Kumneger Yehune (*Coordinator*)
- Miss Elizabeth Debela (*Administrator*)

The Review Panel

The Conference team would like to thank the following for giving their time to review the submissions:

- Dr Bedru Balana
- Mr Fikre Berhane
- Dr Tadesse Biru
- Dr. Bekele Gessesse
- Dr Tsehay Atlaw Humber
- Prof David Humber
- Dr Hailemichael Teshome

We also would like to thank the following for their invaluable contributions to the conference:

- Mr Mike Gebreyohanes
- Dr Elizabeth Kebede Westhead

Welcome from the Conference Organizers

We would like to welcome you to London South Bank University, for the 1st Ethiopian International Multi-disciplinary Knowledge Exchange Conference.

This booklet and CD contains the abstracts of the papers submitted to the conference. Papers have been placed alphabetically by surname of the leading author of the paper.

This 1st ever KE conference aims to establish a forum for all researchers, practitioners & academics from a variety of disciplines specifically to Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia. The conference organizers therefore have embarked on the first step to connect the human and social capital of Ethiopians and initiated a **Global Ethiopian Knowledge Exchange Forum (GEKEF)**. We have named the Conference's main title: **“Unlocking the Potential: The Challenges of Ethiopian Knowledge Exchange”** bearing in mind, the availability of massive potential of Ethiopian scientific knowledge scattered in the world on one hand and the challenges to unlock it on the other.

The Forum has a number of plans to translate its objectives into reality. One of these plans is to organize a number of multi-disciplinary conferences to strengthen knowledge based networks. We are confident that such conferences will bring together interested parties who are able to articulate the leverage of knowledge exchange and possibly develop and formulate practicable policies that can be implemented through working guidelines to chart concrete activities.

Brief objectives of GEKEF are to:

- *Initiate, improve, strengthen and sustain knowledge communication amongst Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia across the world*
- *Exchange information to support younger Ethiopian researchers to succeed in their chosen professional fields*
- *Diffuse ideas on what the key priorities are for Ethiopia to build knowledge with relevance to improve livelihoods of the people*
- *Exchange how to identify sources for support to improve quality training in research to increase the harvest in publications and patents*
- *Create a global knowledge forum that continues to connect the homeland with those outside the homeland;*
- *Share ideas and novel best practice how to convert knowledge into innovation and practical activity;*
- *Imbue the younger generations with a culture of creative thinking, problem solving and foresight in invention and innovation;*

Conference Organizers (September 2011)

Conference Chair

Dr Amare Desta

Amare earned his PhD and MSc from The London School of Economics (LSE). Prior to that, he completed his BSc (Hons) degree in computer science from Cambridge, UK. He continued his studies further and is about to complete a Master of Education (MEd) course in Cambridge as well. He has also acquired various certificates and diplomas in Adult Teaching and Computing fields from University of Westminster and Anglia Ruskin and Cambridge Training and Development Ltd... Because of his passion for continuous learning and personal development, he was chosen as one of the five most outstanding adult learners from East Anglian region and in recognition he was awarded a certificate from the UK Shadow Secretary of State for Education.

Dr Amare is immensely capable educator and act as a Senior Lecturer and a Course Director for Business Information Systems at the London South Bank University, a post he has held since he joined the institute in March 2001. Amare taught various subjects at Goldsmiths College of University of London, University of East London (UEL), the Open University, (OU), Thames Valley University, (TVU) and at Maritime Greenwich College. He has also taught various subjects including advanced IT for Social Scientists for postgraduate students at the London School of Economics, (LSE).

He has supervised 75 undergraduate and more than 35 research based projects including PhD. He has been serving as anonymous reviewer for national and international journals. He is a member of the UK Academy for Information Systems (UKAIS) and acts as a Program Committee Member for International Business Information Management Association (IBIMA) and is also a Member of the Ethiopian Heritage Trust. He acts as an Editorial Board Member of NES (Network Ethiopian Scholars) and more recently elected as a School Governor for Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic in Sidcup, Kent.

Prior to embarking in to an academic career, Amare worked as a Research Associate for Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine in London. He also acted as a Research Associate for the University of Cambridge & Adden Brookes Hospital and as Assistant Scientific Officer, (ASO), for National Institute of Agricultural Botany, (NIAB), in Cambridge. Prior to immigrating to UK, he worked as a Laboratory and Field Technician for International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

At the present time Amare is actively engaged in three areas of his research interest (i.e. knowledge/information management, the role of ICT in Education / Societal Development and Indigenous Knowledge & Communication).

Conference Co-chair

Mentesnot Mengesha

Mentesnot Mengesha is an experienced manager with substantial experience working for a number of organisations in the UK across different sectors including for voluntary organisations, local governments, NHS Trusts and teaching at several universities and local colleges. Mentesnot is an accredited trainer as well as a workplace NVQ/QCF assessor. In addition, Mentesnot has a boardroom directorship experience appointed by the Department of Health to the Newham University Hospital NHS Trust, a post he held since 2005.

While still in Ethiopia, Mentesnot held a number of junior and senior positions including as a Deputy Project Manager for MFM Foundation – in west Ethiopia and a Manager to the Somali Refugee and Maintenance Programme in east of the country.

Mentesnot is a member of several professional bodies including a post graduate fellow to The British Geographical Society and Institute of British Geographers; Associate Member to British Institute of Learning and Social Research Association. Currently, Mentesnot is one of the Co-editors to the Ethiopian e-Journal for Research and Innovation Foresight, (Ee-JRIF). His particular interest is in urban regeneration and public participation where he presented his research works at many international conferences to academic communities in Poland, Ireland, USA as well as here at universities of Bristol, Warwick and London.

In his spare time Mentesnot involves in volunteering and charity activities. He received several “Certificate of Appreciation” for his fund raising activities including for Lion’s Club and Ethiopian Red Cross. As such, he is a lifelong member to the Ethiopian Red Cross. Here in the UK, he had volunteered to many community activities including as a radio show presenter (Spectrum Radio – Negat Amharic Service) where he interviewed high officials like Barbara Roche – Labour MP, the then Immigration Minister; Keith West - QC, CEO and former MP to the Conservative Party; Nick Hardwick the then CEO of the British Refugee Council and many prominent Ethiopian scholars in health, social work and education. He has served briefly as an elected chairman to the Ethiopian Community in GB in mid 1990s and secretary to the Newham Refugee Consortium and member to the Board of Management to The Renewal Programme Ltd.

Mentesnot is known among his friends and contemporaries for his creative writings of numerous short stories, poems and plays. Actually, he has translated William Shakespeare’s King Lear into Amharic in addition to several other English short stories and poems.

Keynote Speaker

Prof. Mammo Muchie

**"the importance of interdisciplinary Knowledge Exchange:
Past, Present and Looking to the Future"**

Professor Muchie holds a PhD in Science, Technology, Innovation for Development (STI4D) from the University of Sussex. He is currently a DST/NRF Research Professor of Innovation Studies at the Institute of Economics Research on Innovation (IERI), at Tshwane University of Technology. He is also concurrently the professor at Development and International Relations (DIR) at Aalborg University. He is also senior Research Associate at the SLPTMD Programme at Oxford University. He has held various positions at University of Kwa Zulu-Natal, South Africa, University in China, Amsterdam University, at Middlesex University, Aalborg University in Denmark and at the University of Cambridge

He teamed up with the founders of the Globelics initiative to start the new relationship between Northern and Southern researchers by focusing research on the challenges of building African innovation systems. He is a scientific Board member of Globelics and the Globelics Academy and is acting as Chief editor of the African journal on Science, Technology, Innovation and Development. He is a scientific board member of the network that connects North Africa, with the Middle East and southern Europe (www.medalics.org).

The first chair on innovation studies supported by the DST/NRF in South Africa was awarded to Prof. Muchie to promote doctoral and post-doctoral research in Africa. He is also acts as a chairman of the Network of Ethiopian scholars (www.nesglobal.org) and is chide editor of the open access electronic journal The Ethiopian Electronic Journal for Research & Innovation Foresight (Ee-JRIF.).

Professor Muchie has widely published in the areas of: (i) International political economy and the emergence of new world orders, (ii) Broad based development studies, (iii) The foundation of an African system of innovation, and (iv) Comparative regional research on technology and development. Since 1985, he has produced over 200 publications, including books, chapters in books, articles in internationally accredited journals and entries in institutional publications.

Keynote Speaker

Dr Tewabetch Bishaw

"The Role of the Diaspora in KE and Networking"

Dr. Tewabetch Bishaw is the Founder and Managing Director (since 2006) of the Alliance for Brain-Gain and innovative Development (ABIDE). ABIDE is an indigenous non-governmental, not for profit , development organization with a focus on brain-gain for capacity building. She is the President of the Ethiopian Public Health Association since 2009. She is also the Secretary General of the African Federation of Public Health Associations (AFPHA).

Before that she worked for over 20 years years for UNICEF in different countries and functions: in Botswana as Country Deputy Director, in Namibia as Programme Director Health / Nutrition / Water and Sanitation, in India as Chief Health Section and as Programme Director for Child Survival and Safe Motherhood Programme, and in Ethiopia as Chief Health Programmes and Accelerated Maternal and Child Health Services Programme . Before joining UNICEF she worked for about 17 years for the Ministry of Health in Ethiopia, first in Services Provision and Program Management at the sub-national level and later in Senior Management and Executive Leadership at the national level.

In the latter function she was responsible for : Health Man-Power Development and Health Education ; Integrated Maternal and Child Health Services; Disease Prevention and Control. She holds a Bachelors degree from Addis Abeba University Gondar Public Health College, Master of Public Health as well as a Dr. of Health Sciences, both from Loma Linda University School of Health, Ca. USA.

Keynote Speaker

Dr Rahel Bekele

"The way forward with KE building in Ethiopia"

Dr Rahel is assistant professor and currently the Dean of the School of Information Science at Addis Ababa University. She holds a PhD in Computer Science from Department of Informatik, University of Hamburg, Germany. Her research interests are mainly in the area of intelligent tutoring system (adaptive e-learning systems), software usability, user interface design and mobile data capture system. She has worked as consultant in knowledge management activities, software related projects for United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and UNICEF as well as on Mobile Phone-Based Data Exchange System to improve Maternal and Child Health in Ethiopia with the World Bank.

Dr. Rahel has published various papers in the area of:

- *knowledge management,*
- *adaptive e-learning systems,*
- *Bayesian Networks as well as usability evaluation.*

She presented papers and gave guest lectures at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, University of Leeds, UK, University of Hamburg, Germany, University of Linz, Austria and University of Mary Land, USA.

Keynote Speaker

Prof. Masresha Fetene

"The role of Institutions as well as individuals to sustain equitable development"

Prof. Masresha earned his PhD in Plant Ecophysiology from the University of Darmstadt, Germany in 1990. Currently he is a Vice President for Research and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Director / General Editor of Addis Ababa University Press. Previously he has had various responsibilities including: Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs of the Faculty of Science and Co-ordinator of the Environmental Science Program of the Faculty of Science. He also acted as Head Department of Biology and Secretary of the Biological Society of Ethiopia and served as an Editor-in-Chief of SINET- Ethiopian Journal of Science.

Prof Masresha is a member of various professional bodies including the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences; the Ethiopian Soil Science Society; the Ethiopian Crop Science Society; the German Botanical Society and Member of the African Mountains Association. He is also a Founding member of the Biological Society of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Society of Humboldt Fellows and Founding member of the Getachew Bolodia Foundation and NAPRECA (Natural Products Network for East. He is also a Member of the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society and Member of the Ethiopian Heritage Trust and founding member of the African Forestry Network, since 1999.

Prof Masresha has supervised 35 Msc thesis and 12 PhD research projects and has published more than 60 papers in the areas Water relations and photosynthesis of tropical trees; Drought stress tolerance of crops; Ecology of Afroalpine plants; Environmental physiology and Ecology of montane forests.

In recognition he has been awarded:

- *Alexander von Humboldt Research Award*
- *German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) PhD Fellowship*
- *Research Fellowship, University of Bayreuth, German Research Foundation*
- *UNESCO-ICRO - Short term Research Fellowship Award*
- *DAAD Short term Research Visit Award*

PROMISES AND PERILS OF THE VIRTUOUS KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE CYCLE IN ETHIOPIAN HEIS

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Abstract

Advanced economies are now moving from a resource-based to a knowledge-based mode of production. National governments of many developing economies also have come to recognize knowledge and innovation as significant driving forces of economic growth and social development. However, they have many challenges to handle before they pave the way to exploit the knowledge resource they have. In light of this view, Higher Education Institutions are required to play a pivotal role in driving this vision by complementing their traditional role – teaching and research – with the development of an effective knowledge exchange system with the private and public sectors. To be able to do this, they need to develop an innovative approach that allows them exploit the knowledge that exists outside their reach for further knowledge reconstruction. This vision however requires clear deliberation on important strategic as well as technical issues.

This paper highlights the challenges of the 21st century in the context of the university to set the background of discussion. It then discusses the rationale for knowledge exchange, identifies the challenges and opportunities the local context offers and concludes by identifying priority issues that need the attention of such institutions while considering the implementation of knowledge exchange in Ethiopian universities.

Key words: *Higher education, knowledge exchange, higher education institutions, innovation, university graduates*

INFORMATION FOR MICRO DECISIONS AND LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT: OUTREACH AS A KEY CHALLENGE IN ETHIOPIA

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Abstract

Drawing from literature of the role of knowledge on development and the various reports on the status of information flow in Ethiopia, this paper examines the impact of information/knowledge exchange on human wellbeing and highlights the salient features of the current situation of information flow in Ethiopia. Knowledge, both technical know-how and information about attributes, makes a difference –from the impact of ‘green revolution’ on food security in India to the Grameen Bank’s ‘credit revolution’ in Bangladesh to the spectacular health changes in Costa Rica. Unfortunately, many developing countries still suffer from knowledge gaps and information problems. In this regard Ethiopia is a case point. Institutional rigidity, heavy-handed government, extensive poverty, high illiteracy, and cultural barriers can explain the problem in Ethiopia. Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopians (especially those who are capable to contribute in knowledge exchange) need to work hand in hand to make a difference via knowledge exchange in Ethiopia.

Key words: Information, Knowledge, Wellbeing, Ethiopia. Theme: The importance of interdisciplinary knowledge exchanges (KE)

PROSPECTS FOR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SHARING AMONG ETHIOPIAN LEARNING INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

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Abstract

Over the past years, the number of public Higher Learning Institutions in Ethiopia has increased from 9 to 23. These institutions have knowledge repositories both electronic and paper based. They are also expected to facilitate the sharing of available knowledge among the academic community – a situation which needs particular attention. Based on a survey, review of available documents and discussions with relevant individuals, the paper presents the existing level of staff awareness and practice of knowledge sharing among higher learning institutions in Ethiopia, as well as the extent of organizational and infrastructural support. The paper also makes recommendations on strategies and mechanisms that need to be devised in order to overcome knowledge sharing barriers and promote effective utilization of ICT for knowledge exchange.

FAITH-BASED COMMUNITIES (NGOS) ACTING AS AGENTS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOC) is one of the oldest religious institutions in the world and a founding member of the World Council of Churches. The EOC is the only pre-colonial church in the Sub-Saharan Africa and it is believed that it is embraced by 65% - 75% the country's population,

In fact, these days more Ethiopians are flocking to the church, even among the so called politically 'enlightened' (more secular) Diaspora. In the 1970s the EOC had lost its traditionally welded power and became too weak to challenge the atrocities committed by the military government. After the fall of the fascist junta, the church seems to have regained its strength. Hence it is hoped this research would attract the attention of the Church's officialdom to rekindle its latent potential to help it align itself to the present world development.

The 1970's revolution is taken as the watershed of history for both the country as well as the church. Pre 1974 the Coptic Church was the most conspicuously dominant non-governmental institution, before the advent of several non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Pre-revolution, the Church's very existence as one of the social /functional/ institution was sufficient contribution to admire. However with the advent of several faith-based communities (f-bcs) and other NGOs, its mere existence could not suffice to retain its admirers. As a result the Coptic Church started conscious effort to emulate the work of the non-indigenous f-bcs which are engaged in developmental undertakings alongside their main function of teaching religion. Thus the focus of this research will be on the Church's social function and its role as f-bc (NGO) in making some contributions in socio-economic transformation of the country.

ROLE OF THE DIASPORA IN KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE NETWORK FOR NATIONAL GROWTH AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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Innovative Development (ABIDE).*

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Abstract

Most developing countries like Ethiopia aspire to fast-track their development processes to alleviate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These aspirations are dependent on a nation's human capital and the progress it makes in education, science technology and innovations. For Ethiopia, engaging the brain power of its professionals fully and effectively is imperative to achieve the country's quest for rapid development and sustainable social change. In this regard, Ethiopia needs to create an enabling environment and establish strategic collaborations and partnerships with all its development partners and sectors.

The Ethiopian Diaspora, including its second and third generation, is among the country's critical intellectual resource whose maximum mobilization and engagement is indispensable. Unfortunately, the Diaspora has not been effectively mobilized, networked and engaged. This paper attempts to (i) highlight the enormity of the problem of brain-drain (ii) underline Diaspora's role in knowledge exchange networks (iii) and recommend to increase viability of Diaspora professional networks.

WHEN LIGHTWEIGHTS BEAT HEAVYWEIGHTS

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Abstract

Contrary to conventional wisdom, lightweight corporations could beat heavyweight conglomerates. Market competitions are not necessarily a two-person zero-sum games in which the winner takes all and heavyweight conglomerates have always the highest probability of success. All too often, market competitions are games played by more than two players, in which the number of players makes a difference. Generally speaking, as the number of players increases, the probability that heavyweight conglomerates will triumph over lightweight corporations diminishes while that of lightweight corporations increases. Market competitions are positive-sum games in which both competition and cooperation go together; and even the loser gets a stake. Based on a three-person three-way duel, this paper demonstrates mathematically the proposition that heavy weight conglomerates do not always win.

MIXING INDIGENOUS AND EXOGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN THE FORMULATION OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN ETHIOPIA: *THE PRINCIPLE OF “A FOOT ON THE GROUND”*

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Abstract

Ethiopia is one of the few African countries which recorded an agriculture sector growth and budgetary appropriation more than the targets set for the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP). Since 2004/05 the average annual growth rate of the agriculture sector in Ethiopia was about 8.4%, exceeding the CAADP target of 6%. Despite the positive changes in the economy, poverty and hunger remained the daunting challenges in Ethiopia. Some politicians and academicians relate the problems of poverty and hunger to the agricultural policies and strategies of the EPRDF government.

This paper is an outcome of a desk study. It uses trend analysis based on the supposition that in recent years indigenous knowledge based policy making has made a difference in the agriculture sector performance of Ethiopia. The strategy known as ADLI and the principles of “a foot on the ground,” are reviewed in order to comprehend the relevance of indigenous knowledge in agricultural policy formulation. The paper concludes that in Ethiopia centuries’ old high dependence on agriculture is changing. Agriculture, and the economy at large, is experiencing remarkable growth. On the other hand poverty and hunger remained discouraging to the government and people of Ethiopia.

Key terms: agriculture, development, growth, policy, strategy, programme and institution.

EXPLORING THE ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF PRESENTING THE DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper attempts to critically explore alternative ways of presenting the discourse and practice of sub-Saharan development. It also attempts to examine the relevance and implications of indigenous knowledge; that is, knowledge associated with long-term occupancy of a place, for the process and objective of development in the present days Africa. Here the aim is to identify for locally defined development; that is, development that reflects the lived realities, and the cultural and political goals and aspirations of Sub-Saharan peoples. It is a form of development rooted in indigenous peoples' sense of moral and spiritual values, and the connections between the social and natural worlds.

NOTES

By African-centred development Globalisation, I am referring to development adapted to the Sub-Saharan African condition. This means the African sense of understanding development, by appropriating the process and objective of development to ensure that locally defined needs and aspirations are possible and sustainable through self-actualisation.

COMPREHENDING THE CHALLENGES OF KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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Abstract

Knowledge and technology transfer and exchange have been a great issue of concern for researchers, policy makers and for most contemporary organizations for some time now. Addressing these areas of research therefore have been identified as paramount in order to identify the contribution such transfer and exchange of knowledge and technology brings to the wider societal developments of the developing nations. A brief review of the literature suggest that a number of countries have invested millions of pounds to achieving knowledge transfer, especially from research and development (R&D) project of the economically developed nations of the Western world to the less developing nations of the North without addressing the explicit as well as the tacit nature of knowledge. The purpose of this paper is therefore to comprehend the benefit and the challenges that explicit and tacit knowledge possess and to look at the definitional appraisal of knowledge and technology transfer/exchange in the context of developing countries of the North.

Key words: *Explicit / Tacit knowledge Management, Developing Countries, Knowledge and Technology transfer/exchange*

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS: A FOCUS ON MEDICINAL PLANT PRODUCTS FROM AFRICA

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&

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Abstract

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) has been a subject of voluminous literature. Much has been written about its origin, implications and dispositions. Yet, the subject of IPRs is fraught with murky issues, especially as they apply to developing countries. This article will examine IPRs within the context of developing countries, in particular those in Africa. It will cite examples in the field of traditional medicine/medicinal plants to show how IPRs have been applied in the past. The paper will also try to chart a few pointers into the future to turn the tide in favour of developing countries in Africa by focusing more on potential collaboration among developing countries.

Keywords: *Intellectual Property Rights, patents, biopiracy, South-South collaboration, South-North collaboration.*

THE IMPLICATIONS OF PROBLEMS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE TO ETHIOPIA

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Abstract

In light of the significance of good governance in facilitating the transfer of knowledge and capital to Ethiopia, there is pressing need to make reforms aimed at improving governance. Specifically, there is a need to change the repressive culture that has passed from generation to generation, having representative government with well function democratic institutions and doing away with failed Marxist oriented policies. In order to achieve this goal, there has to be proper checks and balances among the three branches of the state and efficient executive branch that implement government policies effectively. There has to be also clear demarcation between party and government activities and the civil service need to be out of political influence and employment need to be made only based on merit rather than political loyalty. Existence of an independent judicial organ that uphold rule of law is also critical in terms of building confidence among investors and the Diaspora to freely enter into the country and engage in various activities that facilitates transfer of capital and knowledge.

PLANT MEDICINES IN THE 21ST CENTURY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

An estimated 80% of people in the developing world use traditional medicines as a primary means of healthcare. Many neglected tropical vector-borne diseases, diarrhoea and tuberculosis are still commonly treated with herbal remedies. A growing number of recent reports also documented the use of medicinal plants to treat and/or manage AIDS and other emerging diseases. There is no doubt that such level of dependence on traditional remedies is mainly dictated by bare necessity (instead of choice) as the quality, safety and efficacy of these drugs are rarely documented. In contrast to the developing world healthcare scenario, the Europeans started working on pharmacopoeia some 500 years ago. Here, the tradition of modern drug development from natural sources has been well established. In today's age of combinatorial chemistry and structure-based drug design, drugs of natural origin have still retained a fair share of the market – over 70% of modern drugs of “single chemical entity” today are claimed to be originated from natural sources. Moreover, there is now a growing resurgence of “green medicine” by choice, and hand in hand with this development, a stringent European regulation on the use herbal remedies [1, 2] is being implemented.

In both the developing and developed world, there are lots of opportunities for exploiting medicinal plants as a source of novel medicines as well as utilisation in their crude form. These require providing the scientific evidence for their use, analysis of their safe dose and toxicity limits, and ascertain their quality through routine chemical and pharmacological standardisations. During the last 25 years, our laboratories have been developing several methodologies to facilitate the rapid screening of medicinal plants [3]. Through the use of miniaturised high throughput assays, we have studied target areas in antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, antiprotozoal, anticancer, anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic and various other therapeutic studies [3]. We utilise the most up-to-date innovations in chemistry for the isolation and identification of complex drug molecules from medicinal plants. Based on these cutting-edge methodologies and facilities, we have provided the scientific evidence for several medicinal plants of African, American, Asian, Australian and European origins. We have published over 80 scientific papers, filed several patents and our studies have been reported by the media all over the world. In this communication, the opportunities and challenges of our mission on modernising the use of traditional medicinal plants are discussed.

WHAT COULD HAVE PREDICTED THE NORTH AFRICAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST UPRISING?

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Abstract

The Middle East and the North African (MENA) countries have been going through uprising and changes. These changes were triggered on December 17, 2010, when a street vendor set himself on fire to protest against confiscation of his merchandise and humiliation at the hands of a provincial official in Tunisia. Since then it had engulfed the whole region in to turmoil driving radical changes and reformation of the political landscape. These uprisings have caught everyone unprepared, including strategic analysts, government's officials, migrant workers and foreign and local investors, leading to loss of investment due to force majeure or loss of market and customers. This article analyses macroeconomic data of MENA countries to understand what could have predicted the uprising and how relevant it is for other sub-Saharan countries. The analysis results showed that it is not poverty, Facebook, income inequality or corruption that caused the uprising. It is more likely to be explained by the hierarchy of needs when a rapid improvement of living standard was not matched by political liberalisation and democratic rights. This suggests that these same events may be repeated in countries like China.

PUTTING RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION: THE MISSING LINK FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF LAKE TANA ECOSYSTEM, ETHIOPIA.

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There is always a trade-off between environmental protection and development in most dynamic and complex ecosystems. Therefore, understanding the big picture of the human environment nexus, with its complex interactions is essential. Despite the positive impact on the country's drive towards food security and poverty alleviation, development activities that have been taking place around Lake Tana catchment are casting doubt on the sustainability of the region. Unless timely, protective policy intervention measures put in place, there might be a serious environmental degradation which ultimately ends up with a complete collapse of the whole ecosystem. The paper tries to analyze the importance of integrating different knowledge systems and transferring research knowledge into policy framework and immediate intervention in the Lake Tana ecosystems by which researchers, policy makers at governmental level and user groups at community level can achieve desired outcomes through the sustainable resource use, development and application of innovative approaches. Key words: knowledge systems, knowledge integration, sustainability, Ecosystem, Lake Tana, Ethiopia

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN SOCIAL CAPITAL AND PARTICIPATION: THE CASE OF ETHIOPIAN TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The paper reviews and discusses relevant literature how social capital is defined, understood, functioned and used in a form of participation mainly in the context of Ethiopian traditional institutions. The paper further explores the social function and ownership of such institutions in the day to day life of a society. By so doing, the social, cultural and moral basis of these institutions and how formal and informal participation is stocked and shared among members are revisited.

The paper discusses the fluidity and vulnerability of such traditional institutions and the challenges they faced. It also gives some emphasis on their survival strategies and how their participatory landscape reinvents itself in response to contemporary challenges and risks.

The main argument developed from this review is that despite all the internal and external pressures they endured, however, their role in enhancing meaningful engagement is still relevant. On the other hand, the paper proposes that in time of cultural and economic globalisation, those institutions could open up to review different ways of engaging their members without compromising their fundamental norms and values. New communication technologies could be positively used to respond to the challenge currently confronting them.

Finally, the paper raises more questions for further research as to what need to be done to reinforce their participatory and network role.

Key words:

Social participation, social capital, traditional institutions, cultural globalisation.

CONTEXT IN STORIES FOR ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN

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Abstract

With an increasing demand for relevant publications for children in Ethiopia as education expands and literacy levels rise, can anyone who was not born in Ethiopia, or is a member of the Ethiopian Diaspora, confidently write or illustrate books for Ethiopian children? That question led the author to investigate the barriers that needed to be overcome to contribute to literature which would be of value to a young Ethiopian audience. One of the main issues to address is context and the importance of producing material that children can relate to.

* Adapted from part of a PhD thesis '*Illustrated Literature for Ethiopian Children*'

Key words:

Ethiopia, Education, Children, Literature

INCREASING WATER AVAILABILITY, QUALITY AND QUANTITY THOROUGH PUBLIC EXPENDITURE: AN EXPERIENCE FROM THE PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN UGANDA

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Abstract

The water sector is one of the priority sectors in Uganda, as it directly impacts on the quality of life of the people and overall productivity of the population. Water supply and sanitation are among the key issues emphasized under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, Goal 7 section c) and National Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), which is the key government framework for ensuring poverty eradication through creation of an enabling environment for rapid economic development and social transformation. Water is a key strategic resource, vital for sustaining life, promoting development and maintaining the environment. Access to clean and safe water and improved sanitation facilities and practices are pre-requisites to a health population and therefore have a direct impact on the quality of life and productivity of the population. Besides domestic water supply, water is also vital for: Livestock Water Supply, Industrial Water Supply, Hydropower generation, Agriculture, Marine Transport, Fisheries, Waste Discharge, Tourism, and Environmental Conservation. Water, therefore, significantly contributes to the national socio-economic development and thus poverty eradication.

Despite Uganda's being well endowed with significant freshwater resources, the challenges of rapid population growth, increased urbanization and industrialization, uncontrolled environmental degradation and pollution are leading to accelerated depletion and degradation of the available water resources. Uganda is also faced with the challenge of low safe water coverage (59% rural and 65% urban, as of December 2003).

In order to meet the above challenges, government initiated reforms in the water sector in 1997 to ensure that water services are provided and managed with increased efficiency and cost effectiveness.

This paper therefore seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1. What percentage of Ugandans use protected water sources?*
- 2. How much time is spent while collecting water from the water source?*
- 3. What reasons do households give for not using protected water sources?*

MATHEMATICS FOR A BETTER WORLD – INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

“Mathematics for a better world” is a proposal which aims to relate engineering education with development education, in the context of superior and polytechnic education. In knowledge society as ours, it is fundamental to recognize the role ‘mathematics and statistics’ play to search for the best ways to face the present and navigate towards the unknown future.

This text represents an effort of synthesis in order to show:

- historical perspective on how theoretical mathematics and practical knowledge interact and evolve, sometimes contradicting each other*
- the interrelation between society, scientific and technical education and development education and global citizenship consciousness – in a interdisciplinary perspective.*

We conclude by pointing out the need for developing interdisciplinary approaches to mathematics education, because it is the best way to overcome the prejudices of excessive specialization and also to show how mathematics can contribute to build a better world

Theme: The Importance of Interdisciplinary Knowledge Exchanges

Key words: *Mathematics, Education, Development, Innovation, Interdisciplinary approaches*

SUSTAINABILITY PROBLEMATIC: BETWEEN GLOBAL AND LOCAL – INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

We introduce this article with a brief presentation of the diversity of approaches to the environmental problematic and also to the question of sustainability – which justify the sub-title “interdisciplinary perspectives”.

In a brief and incomplete literature revision, we mention the study of dynamic systems (dissipativs) in which we include dynamic economics [Lorenz, 1989, Louçã, 1997], climate sciences [Allen, 2004], the study of ecosystems [Barnett, 2004, Hassan, 2005], disruptive economics analysis [Kapp, 2007], not forgetting, other fundamental references and approaches [Brundtland, 1987, Comissão Independente População e Qualidade de Vida, 1998, Pearce et al, 1999, World Bank, 2006]

The econometric modelling of these phenomena is very hard and complicated [Simões et al, 2004]. We may find some justifications for these, in the complexity of this problematic, in missing data and bad model specification.

In a last point, we study the relationship between politics and Development Education projects, and defend the importance of combining, through interdisciplinary approaches, investigation with action. We then present some, both theoretical and practical ideas / suggestions of research and action in which we propose: a) the building of an “urban entropy” index to relate with governance and corruption indexes b) researches that take in account both multi-scale approaches [Simões, Ana, 2007] with networking of different actors (given the complexity and the many dimensions involved): game theoretical approaches.

When we analyse policies, from the point of view of sustainable development, we conclude that there is a lack of coherence [www.coerencia.pt]. We often see that there is a lack of coordination and coherence (demagogic politics). Situations of bad governance and corruption lead to crisis and sustainability deficits – such as what is happening in the Horn of Africa. As an action program we also defend that it is urgent to develop and implement more educational and lobbying projects, in different levels, which integrate sustainability as a fundamental vector [European Commission, 2010, Schmidt, 2006].

Key words: Sustainability, Inter-disciplinary approaches, Ecological Footprint, Development Education, Political Coherence

THE NANO-REVOLUTION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: IS AFRICA READY?

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Abstract

Humanity is at the cusp of a technological revolution transitioning from the 'Age of Discovery' to the 'Age of Mastery'. Nanotechnology is central to this revolution. There is an air of realistic optimism about the nanotechnology revolution. Those who missed out on the information technology revolution, resulting in the once yawning 'digital divide', will not miss out this time due to the cost or nature of nanotechnology (Khan, 2006, p.104). Some even argue that such modern technologies should not just be affordable but also extremely affordable to create 'value for money and for many' (Mashelkar and Borde, 2010). In this paper, the aim is to capitalise on this optimism and it is argued that Africa must renegotiate the governance of nanotechnology to ensure that the social solidarity, inclusionary and redistributive ethos are duly and effectively engaged at the global level. The paper highlights what Africa needs to do on its part besides demanding a renegotiation of the terms of the governance of the technology

FAILURE, ERROR, AND THE BOUNDARIES OF ETHIOPIANS MIND

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Abstract:

This study will discuss how correct thinking methods allow us to understand and learn from inevitable failures, errors, and misunderstandings of both society and politics. I will draw on a wide range of scientific theories, policy experiments, and political and social phenomena to illustrate sources of error and also suggest methods for overcoming (but never completely avoiding) these. From the Green Revolution to political reform to identity (ethnic) politics, I will attempt to show how both the fragmentation and commodification of knowledge, together with a static, political philosophy, produce conceptual errors. These are systematic in nature and go beyond mere monetary and individual miscalculation; conversely, my paper will also lead a conversation on how we (Ethiopians) may overcome these errors.

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