Study on the contribution of the alumni and diaspora to the Joint Africa-EU Strategy

Policy brief
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Summary
Europe and Africa have intensified their cooperation both in the fields of higher education and research over the past years. At the same time, issues of migration and development have been at the centre of various joint African-European initiatives.

With the increasing importance given to transnational tendencies in higher education and research cooperation, the role of the academic diaspora has gained growing interest not only with regard to Africa. Many international donor organisations are planning to use the help of the African Diaspora in their collaboration efforts. Equally, many African countries are also trying to use the skills of diaspora in various aspects of development initiatives one of them being in higher education area.

One of the priority areas identified within the Joint Africa-EU Strategy focuses on building the capacity of higher education in Africa by facilitating mutually beneficial cooperation between higher education systems between Europe and Africa. In this regard, it seems crucial to understand how African alumni who have carried out part or all of their degree studies in Europe through the EU programmes and are based in Africa and the African academic diaspora based in EU universities are contributing to capacity building in the field of higher education in Africa. It is furthermore important to investigate current efforts made by African countries to mobilise alumni and the diaspora and the role played by EU supported study programmes in the potential contribution made by African diaspora and alumni towards higher education development in Africa. Findings should help to show ways in which the contribution of African alumni and diaspora for the development of higher education systems in Africa can be reinforced and also feed into the early stages of future programmes.

A recent study launched by the European Commission in the framework of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, and undertaken through desk research, interviews with selected representatives from international organisations, African governments, university representatives and African alumni and diaspora and an online questionnaire addressed to Erasmus Mundus and DAAD alumni led to a detailed picture of how alumni of European programmes perceive their chances to have an impact on the development of higher education in Africa and what motivates them to look for possibilities to exercise some influence on the higher education situation in Africa. The very high degree of such a motivation has to be the point of departure for any strategy concerning the concrete implementation of such an impact. The study shows that there is a high potential among any African alumni of a European study programme, which is not systematically exploited yet and seems to not be utilised to the full possible extent yet.

When asked about challenges and difficulties faced to get further involved, arguments highlighted time and again are the poor infrastructures and badly maintained facilities in African higher education institutions, the lack of resources and the shortage of materials, in particular for research, as major constraints to become more involved in African higher education development. Another aspect related to the lack of incentives and financial support for those who either attempted to return to their country of origin or become more involved in higher education development from a position outside the borders of the country of origin – from African governments in particular. Governments are regarded as key actors generally able to influence and improve the situation, but oftentimes even impeding activities. Many Africans in the diaspora observe a lack of political will to change the situation. Rarely are there official platforms or mechanisms in existence that would allow the African diaspora to contribute and interact with African higher education in a channelled way.

With a view to ways and measures to increase the involvement of African alumni and diaspora in higher education development in Africa, the responses are extremely
diverse. They reflect the different situation of higher education in different African countries, the different approaches of African governments towards African alumni and diaspora of European study programmes as well as, certainly, also the personal circumstances of the particular participants in the survey. There is growing awareness of chances for academics returning to Africa. Higher education systems in many African countries get more political attention and constantly improve and grow again. In a series of countries political documents have outlined a need for a future generation of professors and put therefore particular emphasis on PhD-training. Finally, the research findings allowed formulating a series of recommendations, addressed to African governments, international organisations and institutions supporting higher education, alumni and diaspora organisations, etc. to foster the involvement of alumni and African academic diaspora in the development of higher education in Africa. These recommendations cover (i) the institutionalisation of academic diaspora policy in the African countries through the establishment of offices or government structures dedicated to diaspora affairs or the formulation of specific policies and regulations to facilitate their involvement; (ii) networking issues through the regular setting up, monitoring and updating of databases of alumni of European study programmes and - what is more important - making them available, notably to African countries, and using them as a tool for extensive exchange and networking; (iii) establishing a permanent dialogue on the issue of welcome culture for African academic diaspora willing to contribute to the development of HE in their home countries, on the resources earmarked for this purpose, on the establishment of responsibilities and administrative structures as well as on the mobilisation of the staff already in place for such a culture between African and European universities; (iv) offering further qualification for alumni in African universities and research centres; (v) ensuring full ownership or full participation of African higher education institutions when efforts are made by international organisations and donors to mobilise the African academic diaspora; (vi) support the self-organisation of African diaspora academics; (vii) strengthen research hubs in Africa - identifying a few universities which may attract a larger proportion of domestic and international research funds will help also to address the question of diaspora academics’ integration and possibly giving African alumni of European programmes resources at hand to integrate with their own budget in such a research environment would help the individual as well as the institution to promote research based teaching activities and students to profit from this process; (viii) foster incentives to return to African higher education institutions; and (ix) strengthen direct cooperation between European and African academic institutions.

The African academic diaspora has a vocation to assume a choice role in the European and African higher education systems. The primary condition is the diaspora's willingness to do so, a condition widely confirmed by the present study; the secondary is that African university authorities and governments must see the benefit of their possible involvement and largely facilitate it. If these two conditions are met, the diaspora can then act as liaison between European and African partners, in that its members are in contact with both cultures and their associated work methods.
Resources presented
In the framework of the above mentioned study, information was collected on relevant information available online. Links to web pages of existing networks, NGOs, institutions and research initiatives related to the African diaspora are presented in the following, including web pages of African diaspora ministries.

Information Websites, Research Institute on the African Diaspora, Initiatives of International Organisations

- **African Diaspora Policy Center**
  http://www.diaspora-centre.org/
  The ADPC is a research center aiming at to empower African Diaspora as change agents for the development of Africa. They aim to contribute to an environment for the diaspora to maximise its potential-capital, knowledge and networks. "We conduct evidence-based, policy-related research based on diaspora perspectives, mindsets, experiences and expertise. We do so by stimulating informed policy dialogue and constructive debates between the Diaspora and other stakeholders in the field of diaspora and development."

- **Diaspora Innovation Institute in Nigeria**
  http://diaspora-dialogue.com/
  The Diaspora Innovation Institute was established in 2012 after the maiden edition of the African Diaspora Conferences in Lagos Nigeria at the Prestigious Lagos Business School. The goal of the Institute is to build a structure for Diaspora return, Transition, relocation, Investment, Entrepreneurship and impact on Development. Focus is on Research, Diaspora Marketing, Transition, Conferences and Development. Research is on Entrepreneurship, Environmental Sustainability, Technical knowledge transfer, and local Innovation and Technological application.

- **Diaspora en Ligne**
  http://diasporaenligne.net/qui-sommes-nous-2/
  “Diapora en Ligne” started as a radio program for the Senegalese diaspora in the USA. After 2006, they created a website to enlarge their audience and reach out to the Senegalese diaspora around the world. Their goal is to unite Senegalese living abroad around a common vision of the development of their country and continent. Thanks to their Study and Research Group on Regional and Rural Development, the organisation works on migrants’ rights, migration in the region, and all topics related to the diaspora. They wish to contribute to development policies that take into account specific needs of Senegalese migrants and youth thanks to online training and communication, raise awareness on illegal immigration and take part in the globalisation process.
The International Network for Higher Education in Africa (INHEA) was established in 2003. The Network is intended for scholars, experts, practitioners, policy makers, funders, students, and others engaged in research and development focused on Africa. The website of the network provides a large range of information, such as:

- **Africa News**: regularly posted online news related to African higher education on Twitter from many different sources, such as Allafrica, University World News, Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Ed.

- **Chronicle of African Higher Education**: promoting the scope of higher education research, policy dialogue and communication in Africa; this section is being hosted at the Higher Education Training and Development (HETD), at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

- **INHEA Editorial Series**: periodically posted opinion pieces regarding higher education in Africa by regional experts. The archive of the editorials is also available from the website

- **Africa Focused Blogs From The World View - Inside Higher Ed**: blogs addressing issues in African higher education that have been published on The World View, INHEA’s blog on Inside Higher Ed.

- **IHE Articles on Africa**: articles on African higher education from the recent issue of International Higher Education (IHE). To read more than 70 articles on African higher education, search the CIHE database.

- **Africa Initiatives**: information about current initiatives related to African higher education. More information about initiatives are included in the CIHE database

- **Africa Resources**: links to some of the key resources on African higher education here. Additional resources are included in the CIHE database

- **Books on African Higher Education**: A list of books and reports regarding African Higher Education

- **Association of African Universities (AAU)**
  www.aau.org

- **Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) – African Diaspora Task Force**
  www.adeanet.org

- **The World Bank’s African Diaspora Programme**
  www.worldbank.org/afr/diaspora

- **UNDP’s Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN)**
  Since 1997 UNDP runs the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) program. TOKTEN supports Diaspora professionals to support their country of origin through contributing their expertise on short term assignments to reduce the negative effects of brain-drain. The support consists of paying for travel costs, a daily allowance and medical insurance while on mission. Professionals are invited to share their expertise with governmental agencies, academic and research institutions, NGOs and private sector companies.

- **IMO’s Migration for Development in Africa**
  http://www.migration4development.org/fr/content/mida-migration-development-africa
The Migration and Development program of the International Migration Office (IMO) focuses on maximizing the positive relationship between migration and development. Within that framework the IMO runs the programme Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA). MIDA is a capacity-building programme which aims to mobilise competencies acquired by African nationals abroad for the benefit of Africa’s development. In practice the transfer of skills is carried out virtually through ICT’s, through visits and permanent relocation.

- **UNESCO’s -HP Brain Gain initiative**
  [http://www.migration4development.org/fr/content/mida-migration-development-africa](http://www.migration4development.org/fr/content/mida-migration-development-africa)

  The UNESCO-HP Brain Gain initiative (BGI), initiated in 2006, aims to facilitate university faculty, researchers and students to engage in global collaboration through equipping them with innovative information and communication technologies including grid- and cloud computing. BGI explicitly involves the Diaspora which is seen as an engine of development.

- **The African Union Diaspora initiative**
  [http://pages.au.int/cido](http://pages.au.int/cido)

  The African Union Diaspora initiative was launched to establish strong and regular dialogue with members of the Diaspora.

- **Royal Society –Department for International Development (DFID) Africa Capacity Building Initiative**
  [https://royalsociety.org/grants/schemes/africa-capacity-building/](https://royalsociety.org/grants/schemes/africa-capacity-building/)

  This initiative of the Royal Society-DFID’s stated mission is to “strengthen the research capacity of universities and research institution in sub-Saharan Africa by supporting the development of sustainable research networks.” Scientists in sub-Saharan Africa collaborate with scientists in the UK for mentorships, training PhDs, and building institutional research capacity. Scientists in the UK are not limited to but can include members of the diaspora.

**Alumni and diaspora networks**

- **EMA (Erasmus Mundus Alumni) – African Chapter**

  The Africa Chapter unites EMA Members from the whole African continent. The Association promotes Erasmus Mundus activities on the continent through organisation of workshops, events, participation in educational fairs, networking, as well as through country representatives. It provides assistance to prospective applicants and newly selected Erasmus Mundus students and helps to build networks.

- **African Business Club (ABC)**

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1 “Brain Gain Initiative: Linking African and Arab Region universities to global knowledge” UNESCO 2013
The ABC is a club created by students from ESCP (Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Paris) in 2003. Other schools are now part of the network. The members are mostly from African countries or have African origins, but French students that are interested in the issues related to the continent can also be members.

The ABC organises several events per year such as the Elit Forum, the ABC Innovation, a contest for young entrepreneurs, or the Guest of the Month, which are conferences that allow young African professionals or students to interact and get career or professional advice from a guest expert in a specific field.

The main objectives of ABC are to:

✓ Create a network of professionals and intellectuals concerned with the problems that impact on the development of Africa.
✓ Encourage debate and exchange in its network.
✓ Contribute to Africa’s development by carrying out charitable work in order to raise awareness of African youth in their involvement in development
✓ Facilitate access to information about the opportunities offered in the continent

- **African Business Lawyers’ Club (ABLC)**

  Created in 2011 as a French non-profit organisation, the African Business Lawyers’ Club (“ABLC” or “Club”) brings together young legal practitioners of various backgrounds, who share a common interest in fostering business development in Africa. The members are from 15 countries in Africa, are legal practice in Europe, North America, Asia, and Africa, and most of them studied in Western countries. They organise conferences and events all year long to foster exchange and partnership.

  The objectives of those seminars and conferences are:

✓ Develop an internal expertise in doing business in Africa
✓ Share its members’ skills, expertise and knowledge to students, and legal practitioners located in Africa
✓ Raise awareness of relevant investors and stakeholders on the diversity and quality of the African business environment
✓ Influence the various stakeholders by showing them the need to get acquainted with, and adapt themselves to international standards

- **O.S.E.R. l’Afrique**
  http://oserlafric.com/qui-sommes-nous/

  O.S.E.R. is a network of students and young professionals that aims at encouraging the youth of Africa to share and develop ideas to contribute to the social and economic development of the continent. The members are young Africans mostly from the diaspora all around the world. As such, the members of the team working at OSER all studied in famous universities in France or in England. They define their organisation as « an initiative of African youth, by the African youth, for the African youth ». One of the ideas behind that project is also that Africans are rather successful in Europe but they tend to lose interest in Africa and their home countries, when their role is actually essential and they should be the ambassadors of their countries abroad. OSER also wants to promote cultural exchanges between young Africans and citizens of other continents, to better integrate the continent in global development. Among their activities, they are writing a notebook called “Carnet pour la jeunesse pour l’Afrique” that gathers contributions from young Africans from around the
diaspora expressing their ideas about the future of their countries and continent. OSER also organises conferences and forums on specific themes related to the development of Africa.

- **FESSEF (Fédération des Etudiants et Stagiaires Sénégalais en France)**
  [http://fessef.fr/accueil/](http://fessef.fr/accueil/)
  The FESSEF is an organisation that helps Senegalese students and interns in France to get practical information about life in France, provides a network platform for students to meet, but also to connect them with organisations, institutions, and companies. The FESSEF also helps recent graduates or young professionals to enter the labor market, in France or in Senegal. They organise conferences and seminars where they invite professionals and companies from Senegal and France to help students in France get the information they need to enter the labor market. Indeed, a lot of students from the diaspora wish to go back to Senegal to work but they often lack information about the local professional world. Those meetings contribute to the development of links between the diaspora of Senegalese students in France and their home country.

- **Africa Society of Oxford University**
  [http://users.ox.ac.uk/~afrisoc/](http://users.ox.ac.uk/~afrisoc/)
  The Oxford University Africa Society provides a strong and legitimate voice within the university community and beyond for African students and others who are linked to the continent by way of ancestry, research, experience, or interest.

- **Versatile**
  [http://www.associationversatile.fr/versatile/presentation](http://www.associationversatile.fr/versatile/presentation)
  Versatile is an NGO created in 2009 to connect young Cameroonian people from the diaspora in France.

- **Kenyan Community Abroad – Chapter in France**
  The Kenyan Community Abroad (KCA) is a socio-political, non-partisan organisation which is registered in Washington, D.C. and Rhode Island State in the USA. It is composed primarily of Kenyans living outside Kenya. KCA was founded in March 1997 with a view to giving Kenyans abroad a platform on which to exchange views and help bring change back home. KCA seeks to facilitate the establishment of Chapters in locations around the world where there is a significant Kenyan presence, such as La Maison du Kenya – KCA Europe, based in France.

- **Teranga Web – L’Afrique des Idées**
  [http://terangaweb.com/page-d-exemple/](http://terangaweb.com/page-d-exemple/)
  *L’Afrique des Idées* is an NGO created 3 years ago to promote debate and exchange of ideas on various topics related to Africa. It has grown substantially to become one of the most important Think Tanks on Africa. The goal is to provide information, ideas, and research to contribute to the development of Africa. The members of this Think Tank are mostly students or young professionals from African countries and the diaspora.
The goal of the website Teranga is to publish all intellectual production of the organisation but also from any person contributing to the public debate in Africa. This site allows people interested in the issues related to Africa to know more about the recent debates and matters. The people targeted are mostly young people of Africa since they are the ones who can contribute the most to the future development of the continent.

- **National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students – Diaspora Youth Participation Program**

http://www.nueys.org/

NUEYS’ (the National Union of Eritrean Youth & Students) mission is to cultivate and produce capable youth by promoting and strengthening Eritrean youth in all aspects of national, regional, and international development processes.

NUEYS is the outcome of the historic resistance of Eritrean students against colonialism and was officially established at its first congress in 1978 in the city of Keren. NUEYS works to assure the comprehensive development of the youth, and to encourage their participation and contribution to Eritrea and the global youth movement. NUEYS Central Office is located in Asmara, Eritrea. NUEYS now has 7 regional branches and over 50 subbranches in Eritrea. NUEYS also extends to Eritreans in the Diaspora with over 20 international chapters, in over 15 countries around the world.

The Diaspora Youth Participation program organised under the NUEYS Foreign Affairs Department, aims at making it easier for youth in the Diaspora to participate in their country’s development through sustainable projects.

- **Club Efficience Junior**

http://efficiencejunior.org/node/7

The Club Efficience Junior is an organisation aiming at promoting the work, ties, and rights of the afro-Caribbean youth community. It is derived from the think-tank Club Efficience which was created to promote socio-professional links within the African-Caribbean diaspora. The Junior club has several objectives:

- Promoting, creating a network, developing skills, solidarity, and cooperation through meetings and seminars in order to share and exchange on professional practices
- Managing and participating in project promoting the socio-economic development of Africa or the Carribeans
- Managing and participating in project which work towards solidarity and integration of the African-Caribbean population
- We promote solidarity among young people of the African-Caribbean diaspora by creating a network which publish information for young professionals and students

- **African Diaspora Youth Network in Europe**

http://www.adyne.eu/

The African Diaspora Youth Network in Europe is a network for young Africans living in Europe and active members of different organisations dedicated:

* to Enhance youth participation Reinforce to the development of ADYNE’s platform
* to impact policy makers and youth policies
* to help shape the life of young people with African background living in Europe

Their activities include:
✓ To Provide a space for Individuals and organisations to exchange and share similar interests, goals and aspirations;
✓ To offer strategic support for capacity-building, networking and the dissemination of Good Practices;
✓ To voice the concerns of its member organisations in the political agenda of governmental, as well as European, African and international institutions;
✓ To produce policies and positions, all which are based on the research, experience and expertise of young Africans living in Europe.

- **Association of African Students in Europe**
  [http://aase-network.wix.com/aase#!about/c4nz](http://aase-network.wix.com/aase#!about/c4nz)

The Association of African Students in Europe (AASE) is a network founded in Brussels, Belgium in February 2010 by a group of African students out of the need to unite, empower and develop African students across Europe thereby enabling them to adjust to their new environment while at the same time providing their European peers the opportunity to get to know more about Africa and Africans beyond the 'international media and aid organisation's camera lenses'.

Our goal is to build a strong African Student community in Europe that will serve as a bridge between Africa and Europe thereby serving as an economic, social and cultural instrument for the growth and development of the African continent.

- **Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation Europe (NIDO Europe)**

Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation Europe (NIDOE) is a non-governmental, non-political, non-religious and non-tribal organisation whose membership is drawn from Nigerians living in Europe, estimated at about over five million.

The idea of the organisation is that Nigerians living in the Diaspora should come together to support national development. The NIDO works with the government and Nigerians in the Diaspora to assist the country in the task of nation building.

- **French social network for foreign alumni of French study programmes**
  [www.francealumni.fr](http://www.francealumni.fr)

On November 26th 2014, Laurent Fabius, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development and Geneviève Fioraso, Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research, have officially launched francealumni.fr, the new French social network for foreign alumni who have studied in France in the Quai d’Orsay, with 400 academic, economic, diplomatic and politics players.

The digital platform francealumni.fr aims at allowing the ever-growing number of foreign alumni to stay in touch with France, its schools, universities, companies and cultural offer. With francealumni.fr, they will be able to exchange, access training, scholarship, internship or job offers, stay informed of the French cultural and tourist news. This new website is also a good opportunity for the international development of our companies and universities to make new economic and academic partnerships with alumni.

This platform has been long awaited, and it is now powered and managed by Campus France, French operator of higher education mobility and will be arranged around a central site and local sites, which will be gradually launched by French embassies abroad. Ten of them will integrate the platform in 2014: Brazil, Germany, Colombia, Gabon, Japan, Jordan, Philippines, Kuwait, Turkey and Vietnam. In 2015, other French embassies will join this initiative. The Alumni platform will offer services in French and English. Local sites will also be available in local language.
• **Networks in Sub-Saharan Africa of alumni of DAAD scholarship programmes (Germany)**
  https://www.daad.de/alumni/netzwerke/alumni-vereine/liste-alumni-vereine/12429.de.html

**African diaspora ministries web pages**

- **Ministry in charge of Moroccans Abroad and Migration**

- **Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration**
  http://www.maliens-exterieur.gouv.ml/

- **Nigeria House Committee on Diaspora Affairs**
  http://diasporacommitee.com/

- **Ghanaian Diaspora - Ministry of Foreign Affair of Ghana**
  http://www.ghanaiandiaspora.com/

- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Togo**

- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Diaspora Engagement Affairs Directorate General**

- **Ministry of Diaspora and Investment of Somalia (representation in the UK)**
  http://modai.org/

- **Diaspora General Directorate – Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rwanda**

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- French Embassy in Kenya 2013: Note on the policy of the Embassy regarding scholarships and the activities of Campus France.

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