

ADEA-African Diaspora Task Force: Progress so far

Since the formation of the African Diaspora Task Force in September 2012, systematic progress has been made by ADEA in involving and collaborating with the African Diaspora in determining how to assist African countries in education and training. The Diaspora members have demonstrated their commitment to assist ADEA and willing countries in education transformation. The following activities of the African Diaspora Task Force are worth noting.

Idea Generation: Immediately the Task Force was created a list serve was put in place to facilitate communication among the members and with the ADEA Secretariat which has the responsibility for coordinating the Task Force. The Coordinator launched a “brainstorming” exercise through the list serve with a view to generating ideas, initiatives and programs on which the Diaspora and ADEA could work together. The ideas generated were circulated to all the members of the Task Force requesting them for comments and views in terms of priority, feasibility, ability to finance, possible partnership, importance, urgency, probable impact, and how long it would probably take to implement selected initiatives.

Project Identification: Communication with the Task Force members was largely through the list serve and occasionally through Skype or telephone conversation with individual members. In order to solidify the growing relationship among the Task Force Members and with ADEA, and also to have a forum to critically examine ideas and initiatives, a meeting was considered necessary. A meeting of the African Diaspora Task Force was held on 29-30 July 2013 in Tunis. The purpose of the meeting was to examine their proposed initiatives, identify new ones, select viable projects, agree on concrete implementation steps and also identify partnerships and sources of funding for the initiatives. There were a number of major outcomes of the meeting. First, the Task Force was able to identify not only projects that could be implemented but also the countries that were willing and ready for collaboration. Second, the Task Force also proposed three sources that ADEA could immediately tap for financial support to its programs: (i) USAID Inaugural Fund; (ii) Foundations owned by African Diaspora in the USA and (iii) certain individuals/organizations that have indicated their desire to support education on the continent.

Diaspora at iCEER: The International Conference on Engineering Education and Research took place in Marrakesh, Morocco on 1-5 July 2013. It is one of the iCEER conference series sponsored around the world by the iNEER (now with 38,000 members in 98 countries). It was the first time that an iCEER conference ever took place in Africa. The theme of the conference was “*Borderless Global Engineering Education, Research and Industrial Development*”, and its main objective was to bring together researchers, academics, industrial partners, policy makers and experts in the field of Innovative and Technology Enhanced Engineering and Vocational Education. The Chairperson of the Conference is a member of the African Diaspora Task Force. Not only did ADEA actively participate in the conference it also supported it financially.

Diaspora and Kano State, Nigeria: Following the meeting of the African Diaspora Task Force in Tunis in July 2013 and the decisions made, three professors at the meeting submitted a joint a proposal on the project “*Enabling Technology for Education and Training*”. It was tailored towards meeting certain specific educational needs of the Kano State government of Nigeria. Its implementation would include mobile laboratory, online engineering, etc. In November 2013, two of the professors had another meeting

with a top government official of the Kano State in Tunis where it was agreed that ADEA would co-organize a workshop with the Kano State Government in January 2014 in pursuit of the finalization and implementation of the proposal.

Diaspora at ASA Conference: A member of the African Diaspora Task Force attended the meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA) in Baltimore, USA on 21-24 November 2014. The theme of the meeting was “*Mobility, Migration and Flows*”. The representative of the Task Force organized a panel of discussants which deliberated on significant issues and explored possibilities for publication, including a journal of the African Diaspora. She also distributed tens of copies of a flyer on the African Diaspora Task Force.

The Task Force Challenge: The activities of the African Diaspora are coordinated in ADEA’s Secretariat. The Task Force had planned that in 2014 it would organize workshops; create a database of the African Diaspora in specific professional areas; bring some selected African Governments and the Diaspora together to dialogue on how to effectively engage the African Diaspora, etc. These activities have been put on hold because of the Association’s current difficult financial situation.