

Internationalization of Higher Education and the Need for Introducing Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ACTAS) in Africa: Potential Opportunities and Challenges

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Globalization and internationalization are widely discussed phenomena, which are also key factors shaping and challenging the higher education sector across the world. In broad terms, internationalization includes a broad range of elements such as curriculum, teaching-learning, research, institutional agreements, student/teacher mobility, development cooperation, etc (Knight, 2004). Internationalization of higher education is both a challenge and an opportunity; what matters is the way nations respond to it. This paper mainly argued for the introduction of African Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ACTAS) in African higher education in response to the internationalization of higher education. As internationalization of higher education is a worldwide phenomenon, African higher education cannot be invulnerable from the influence of internationalization. The only option that African higher education can do is to positively respond like their European counterpart and make use of the potential opportunities that internationalization provides.

Like the European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS), which mainly focuses on purposes that benefit the higher education system in one or another way, the introduction of ACATS will also benefit the African higher education system. For instance, it facilitates flawless movement of African students and staff mobility mainly within Africa, and minimizes the unidirectional mobility (from Africa to the rest of the world); it influences universities to develop national and regional quality assurance system which encourages higher education collaboration. ACTAS, as an organizing principle, is not confined to the benefit of the higher education system. It has multifaceted specific benefits even beyond the higher education system: it facilitates the attempt of minimizing the emigration of highly skilled people by establishing quality education and working environment; and it also fosters regional integrations and African development and unity.

This paper also identified some potential challenges that may hinder the implementation of ACTAS. Some of these are: financing such a broad and multifaceted system; getting optimistic vision and commitment of each African universities and nations; and better skilled manpower may facilitate brain drain. However, If African countries and their development partners tirelessly work and wholeheartedly engaged in the implementation of ACTAS and react to the potential challenges, the introduction of ACTAS would have a magnificent effect on African development and unity in general and on African higher education in particular.