

University of Minnesota and Kisii University College Collaboration

September 23rd, 2011 to October 4th, 2011

This collaborative effort started with the 1st ever South Western Kenya Economic Conference of July 31, 2009 in which one of the outcomes was to: Link South Western Kenya institutions with International Institutions; an endeavor by the Diasporas' efforts of giving back to their community of origin.

Why U of M:

The University of Minnesota with its many International linkages has made Minnesota an international iconic state in the area of medical technology, science, agriculture and business. There is potential for a young institution like Kisii to this connection and expand its interests. The benefits are mutual and should benefit both institutions. But for Kisii it is the intangible benefits in all areas of University academic undertakings and dissemination of information to the region that is important.

Why MKIDA focused on collaboration?

Collaboration involves a partnership, Alliance or network, aimed at a mutually beneficial defined outcome. The components essential for successful collaboration are trust, cooperation and mutual benefit. Progress toward an outcome involves the exchange and generation of new knowledge for which a 'route to end use' is clearly identified and provides benefit to all parties. The benefits to be derived from this collaboration are diverse and can be grouped into:

1. The sharing and transfer of knowledge, skills and techniques, including social and team management skills
2. The creation of critical mass in research skills, facilities and larger infrastructure
3. Enhanced capability for creation of new knowledge
4. There is potential of practical application of research output for the benefit of the community
5. Cross-fertilization of ideas which can generate new insights to provide better outcomes
6. Enhanced intellectual companionship and peer recognition
7. The opportunity to increase the visibility of work including dissemination of information and knowledge through formal and informal networks, publication and route to end use activities
8. Prestige and influence.

What was the outcome of the U of M visit to Kisii College?

As part of a joint output from the University of Minnesota from 20th – 23rd February 2011, to Kisii University College (KUC), it was proposed that a process to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be initiated. The MOU would focus on the following identified areas:

1. Capacity building efforts.

2. Grant writing to facilitate research.
3. Books in Law, Medicine, Agriculture and ICT.
4. Joint staff research proposals for competitive international grants.
5. Joint curriculum Development with credit transfers.
6. Joint mounting and training of staff development programs – Msc and PhD/short courses (Specialized Courses)
7. Staff exchange in relevant disciplines of mutual interest.
8. Student exchange from 2nd to 4th years.
9. Short 3-4 week exposure programs for American students to KUC

The mission of Kisii University College Council (KUC) is to train human resource that meets the development needs of the country and international labor market, sustain production of quality research; disseminate knowledge, skills and competencies for the advancement of humanity. Because of this we in MKIDA expect a collaboration focused on a market driven academic programs at Kisii University College aimed at:

1. Establishing programs of mutual interest to both institutions in strategic sectors such as Agriculture, Health, IT to help exploit the economic potential of the region.
2. To develop an outreach program to disseminate knowledge to the region. This will help the University develop strategic relationships with the community
3. To engage in meaningful research in partnership with the U of M in an effort to solve various problems affecting the region.

When the delegation arrived it met with MKIDA board that impressed upon the delegation the importance of this collaboration. It was the board's desire to make sure they:

1. Help in making sure the delegations visit is productive.
2. Emphasis the premium placed in this collaboration/relationship.
3. Be a center of reference and guidance during their stay.
4. Be ready to deal with any barriers that might arise such as distance, dominance, dissonance and discomfort.

Minnesota Visit

Following a visit to Kisii by the University of Minnesota delegation (Dr. Jones, McQuaid, Durgan, Baldwin and Larissa) in February 20th – 23rd, 2011 it was agreed that a followed up visit be made by the Kisii University College faculty to the University of Minnesota. The Minnesota leg of the visit started on September 23rd, 2011 through October 4th, 2011. The Kisii delegation was led by Prof. John Akama, Principal, Dr. Alfred Anakola Shitandi in charge of Research and extension services, Dr. Evans Basweti,

Chair department of Agriculture and Dr. Geoffrey Otomu Dean school of Health Services and Superintended of Kisii Level 5 Hospital.

With a program jointly developed between the University of Minnesota and MKDIA, the delegation met with University Staff, scientist and researchers and discussed various areas of common interest and how those areas further the academic mission of the University. These meetings comprised of scientists and researchers in agriculture, fisheries, veterinary medicine, public health, medical school, and other academic areas in the Twin Cities Campus. They also had an opportunity to fly to Crookston Campus and Grand Rapids Research Station for more discussions and meetings. The tour exposed the delegation to the University Extension program and its links with the community.

The delegation also met with various businesses with an extension network with the University of Minnesota. Some of these businesses have a working or a network of relationships in African through different programs. The delegation was hosted by General Mills in Golden Valley, Cut Fruit Express in Inver Grove Heights, Cargill of Minnetonka and various Organic farms in and around the twin Cities. These exposed the delegation into holistic nature of academic and collaborative linkages with the community. (Besides, it was MKIDA's goal to expose the delegation to potential investors and interested parties who might be interested in exploring opportunities in the region. These opportunities will be followed up by MKIDA).

The visit ended with agreements in collaborative research, extension, student and academic exchange opportunities for both institutions. The immediate areas identified were in agriculture, food science, health, agro-tourism with an emphasis on student and staff exchange and study abroad programs. Below is an action plan.

Action Plan:

AREA	ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME
1. Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota Agricultural Students and Trainee (MAST) Program invite students from KUC • Develop a research project on Soybeans and Corn. Develop a funding proposal 	Immediately
2. Staff and Student Exchange and Study Abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisheries Department to receive a KUC staff to be trained at the U of M on Fish Farming • Student to study at KUC Under study abroad program • Student Exchange to be implemented once a 	January 2012 May 2012

	curriculum is agreed to	
3. Extension Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an extension model in farming and Health systems in Kisii to be gradually expanded to all academic programs 	Immediately
4. Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of simulator training of students and Healthcare personnel in prevention and detection of communicable diseases, safe motherhood. Malaria research program and HIV/Aids Research on Environmental diseases and other public Health Issues 	Immediately
5. Common Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a common curriculum in areas of mutual interest; food science, agriculture, Health, IT, etc 	Immediately (KUC and U of M Crookston have a common curriculum facilitate student Exchange)
6. Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post a Liaison Officer to KUC 	As soon as feasible. From time to time U of M staff will travel to Kisii to assist with implementation

There was an agreement between the two institutions that this is a collaboration of three; MKIDA, KUC and U of M and we must continue to work together for the intended benefits to materialize to the two institutions. With a signing of the MOU and a commitment by the two institutions to this relationship there are potential benefits for South Western Kenya region as a whole.