

Education Partnerships in Africa (EPA)



ZAMBIA – NORTHERN IRELAND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND BUSINESS EDUCATION PROJECT

A British Council grant was awarded to St Mary's University College Belfast in partnership with the University of Zambia to assist in establishing academic and student based links and has the intention of transferring knowledge for the enhancement of business education between Zambia and Northern Ireland. It will run from July 2009 until December 2010.

A partnership between the University of Zambia and St Mary's University College had been ongoing since 2007, and was formalised by a *Memorandum of Agreement* in April 2009 between the Vice Chancellor of UNZA, Professor Stephen Simukanga, and the Principal of SMUC, Professor Peter Finn. The arrangement has included study visits, field research and an ongoing research between staff at each institution looking at how the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals are impacting on sub-Saharan Africa. There are also ongoing links with organisations and businesses which are connected to the University in Zambia.

This Zambia-Northern Ireland Project aims to create a knowledge exchange on employability skills and entrepreneurialism between the Departments of Development Studies at the University of Zambia and the Departments of Human Development, Work Related Learning and the International Office at St Mary's University College, Belfast.

The Project has the intention of responding to the challenge of educating students in Higher Education in Zambia and university business partners in the region to actively participate in regional economic development and work related learning. Outcomes will include: participants becoming familiar with issues relevant to employability, the social economy and the business environment in Zambia; the institutional partners understanding the significant role students and university business links can play in generating economic opportunities; building on the current relationship that is ongoing between the two universities; and harnessing a knowledge transfer that will assist the

Zambian academics, students and business partners in maximizing indigenous and international opportunities.

Activities entail:

1. A new taught undergraduate course with a business development programme.
2. Provision of a joint St Mary's and UNZA 'Certificate in Business Skills' intended for those who participate and complete a programme of business education seminars and targeted at senior students and social economy partners.
3. Providing ongoing information and advice on 'work related placements' as a means of enhancing employability.
4. An inter-institutional Conference on employability and entrepreneurialism.
5. The production of a substantial report which can then be disseminated to academics and business leaders across Zambia.
6. The buy-out (part-time) of key departmental academics and the buy-in (as speakers) of key regional entrepreneurs for seminars and the Conference.
- 7 Building up resources (and IT support) for a department based unit in business development at UNZA.

The collaboration intends to match the knowledge skills that exist in the university system in Northern Ireland with providers of economic development initiatives in Zambia. The Project will build on the expertise that exists in St Mary's College in the fields of Work Related Learning, Business Studies, the Social Economy, Micro-financing, and Entrepreneurialism to enhance current and ongoing academic and learning activities in the University of Zambia.

This Project aims to contribute to the provision for teaching and learning in the Zambian context with an innovative partnership which will bring academics and teaching resources together to facilitate an active experience which will enable students and business leaders to avail of the most recent theories and case experiences of enhancing business activity in a developing economy such as that of Zambia. The shared understanding of employability and entrepreneurship and skills development are that of activities and practices that enhance the economic opportunities of individuals and business organisations in an ever changing economic climate. The hope is that this project will construct a framework around which the participants (academics, students and business leaders) can share experiences, gain knowledge of activities that enhance economic opportunities, have access to international expertise on key motivating activities, and provide the skills to inform business operations and the understanding of commercial generation.

The project held its first entrepreneurship seminar on 18th March 2010, at the Commonwealth Youth Programme Centre in Lusaka. Next major event is an Inter-Institutional Conference *'Africa, Economic Development and the International Context,*

and Employability and Entrepreneurialism' to be held at the Commonwealth Youth Programme Centre in Lusaka on 8th July 2010. Speakers will include staff from St. Marys University College, Queens University, Belfast, Northern Ireland and the Department of Development Studies, The University of Zambia.

Project Contact person:

Chrispin R. Matenga

Project Coordinator, Zambia

Department of Development Studies, The University of Zambia

Email: mmatenga@yahoo.com

Cell: 0977368414