

## INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

### *The Future Missions and Roles of the African Universities*

by Geremie Sawadogo

African universities are at a crossroads in their development. The worldwide economic recession of the 1980s which hit African countries hardest, the institution of new democratic regimes (whether successful or not) and the relative freedom of expression that has resulted, the emergence of global competitive markets, and increasing interdependency in the world economy witnessed by the 1993 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade/GATT, have all affected and will continue to affect the way African universities have traditionally operated and trained their students.

Indeed, these new economic developments have made it more difficult for African countries to finance needed educational changes, including new infrastructures to meet increased demand



for higher education, better facilities, and staff salary demands.

The resulting dissatisfaction and general disillusionment over the value of university education and the increasing politicization of the universities have often led to unrest and call for a reassessment of the roles and missions of universities in order to better prepare these institutions to meet Africa's development needs for the 21st century.

Universities absorb a proportionally high percentage of national budgets in Africa and it is only economically sound that there be demands for accountability. Unlike the industrialized world, where national research activities are not exclusively carried out

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## COUNTRY UPDATES

### **Africa: Violent Protests Roused by Tough Cuts**

As the new academic year begins in West Africa, some Francophone countries are determined to enact unpopular university reforms, repeatedly postponed in the past because of student and staff opposition.

For years, the countries of the region have known that they cannot sustain the model of free higher education, generous academic salaries and student grants introduced after independence. All are trying to cut student numbers.

The region's flagship University of Dakar in Senegal is currently enrolling students on a tough new basis. The university plans to trim its 20,000 student population down to 15,000, part of a World Bank-funded program for a leaner, more selective higher education system.

In Benin, where grant cuts are being bitterly opposed by students, the army patrols the campus of the University of Benin to prevent violent protests against

the new measures. Formerly, students could theoretically spend up to nine years living on grants—three in each main faculty. Now the grants have been cut off and only one repeat year permitted.

The University of Sierra Leone failed to reopen for the new academic year. The government of Captain Valentine Strasser has ordered it to remain closed for renovations until further notice, an excuse that many among the academic staff do not believe.

Furthermore, governments can no longer provide jobs for graduates. In Cameroon, where 20,000 civil service jobs have been axed, graduates are becoming street vendors.

AUPELF, the Francophone Agency for Higher Education and Research, is taking measures to improve standards in universities whose degrees are increasingly spurned abroad. Funded mainly by France and Canada, AUPELF

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*World Education News & Reviews* (ISSN-0897-6724) is a quarterly publication of World Education Services, a private, not-for-profit organization founded and incorporated in 1974. The views and opinions expressed in articles and information submissions published in *WENR* are those of the authors and contributors and not necessarily those of WES. ©1994 World Education Services. All rights reserved. Materials in this publication may not be reproduced in any form without permission. Annual subscription rates are \$50 within the U.S. (bulk mail delivery); \$60 (payable in U.S. dollars and including air mail delivery) for subscriptions outside of the U.S. Address correspondence to: World Education News & Reviews P.O. BOX 745 Old Chelsea Station New York, N.Y. 10113-0745  
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## The Suffering of Innocents

The World Bank reports that frequent closing of schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since the beginning of the *intifada* (popular uprising), led to "an increase in dropout rates, a breakdown in discipline and deterioration of student achievement." Widespread violence in the area has also produced an "alarming growth" in the population that is physically or mentally disabled. The Palestinians claim that over 43,000 people were injured between 1987 and 1993 in connection with the uprising, and that about 11,000 persons suffered significant, permanent physical disabilities.

Almost every evening our televisions bring us new evidence of the devastation wrought on children all over the world by civil strife. The cameras spare us nothing—a wide-eyed Bosnian boy who has just seen his young mother shot dead in the street by a distant sniper; an Islamic teenager murdered for wearing a veil to school in Algeria; a Rwandan infant found lying in a ditch suckling at her dead mother's breast; and now, small children grotesquely maimed and piled atop one another in death awaiting makeshift burials in the secessionist Russian republic of Chechnya.

Each one of us in the coming year, through the social pressure of opinion strongly expressed, can encourage peace efforts and help stop the suffering of innocents everywhere.



## COUNTRY UPDATES

has set up a regional Ph.D. school of tropical medicine in Gabon.

*The Times Higher Education Supplement* 11/4/94

### ☛ Algeria: Education Threatened

In a statement published by the Saudi Arabian newspaper *El Hayat*, the Armed Islamic Group/AIG warned that since, in its estimation, Algeria's current educational system was at the service of the present regime, it has decided to "formally forbid" all education in Algeria.

Thus, it stated that any student, teacher or administrator who chooses to frequent an academic institution, whether it be a secondary school or a university, will be subject to "dissuasive" reprisals.

In addition the AIG also threatened to physically destroy any academic institution which ignored its warning. This latest threat by the AIG is part of the escalation of their murderous campaign against the current Algerian government.

*World University Service Human Rights Bulletin* 10/94

### ☛ Asian Universities to Offer Studies in French

The 1994-95 academic year will see several changes in selected Cambodian and Vietnamese higher institutions. Under terms of an accord signed in 1994 between the AUPELF-UREF (Francophone Agency for Higher Education and Research) and certain universities, several hundred students will be able to pursue

university courses taught in general French for 10 hours a week the first year, and taught in specialized French the second year. From the third year, all teaching will be conducted in French.

The institutions offering instruction in French in the following disciplines are: The Open University of Ho Chi Minh City: law; The University of Hanoi: chemistry, law; The National Polytechnic Institute of Hanoi: engineering science; The University of Cantho: computer science, agricultural science; The University of Ho Chi Minh City: computer science, chemistry; The University Center of Professional Development and Health of Ho Chi Minh City: medicine; The University of Phnom Penh: medicine; The National Polytechnic Institute of Hanoi: science, agricultural technology; and The Semi-Public University of Ho Chi Minh City: translation and management.

*UREF Actualites Septembre/Octobre 1994*

## ☛ China to Expand Educational TV

China, which now has the world's largest educational television network, will further expand it by the end of the century to meet increasing demand for vocational and adult education. More than 70 hours of educational programs will be broadcast daily on four channels.

Currently, China has more than 1,200 educational television stations, over 7,600 satellite ground stations and 66,000 video viewing rooms for educational purposes.

More than 1.3 million people have graduated from television universities across the country since 1986, when satellite technology was adopted. The number of graduates is equal to 37 percent of those from conventional colleges.

More than 100 million people watch educational television programs. More than two million teachers and school administrators have received on-the-job training through this medium.

*China Daily 9/15/94*

## All To Pay University Tuition in 1997

All college freshmen in 1997, except for those in special majors, will have to pay their own tuition, according to the State Education Commission/SEC. Graduates in the year 2000 also will be free to choose their own jobs.

Although the government is currently the prime funding source for most Chinese college students, the SEC started a pilot program this fall requiring students at 40 higher institutions to pay tuition based on their entrance examination scores, with fees ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 yuan (\$117 to \$176) a year. Since parents and students quietly accepted this reform, it was decided to extend the tuition payment requirement nationwide.

The total cost of educating each student averages 8,000 to 10,000 yuan (\$940 to \$1,174) a year. Schools enrolled about 90,000 students this year, while 2.51 million students took the national college entrance examination in

July. The total number of college graduates will reach a record 895,000 in 1995, nearly 200,000 more than this year.

*China Daily 11/14/94*

## ☛ Estonia Advances Business Education

Reorganization of the education system has given new life to private schools, which were all closed in 1940 by the socialists. Even before parliament passed a law allowing private schools in 1993, many had already been set up at all levels of education. Currently, 18 private secondary schools enroll about 1,500 pupils, and about 28% of all first-year students entered private universities in 1993-94.

The Estonian Business School (EBS), founded in 1988, was the first new private establishment, offering management education and courses in English language. A one-year executive training program began in January 1989, followed by an MBA program in 1990. This developed into a five-semester program, of which one semester was an internship abroad. In 1991, the first undergraduate students were accepted for a Bachelor of Business Administration, and in 1993, study by correspondence was introduced. EBS now also offers preparatory courses for entrance examinations, and with 400 students, plays a leading role in the development of private education.

In April 1994, the Estonian Association of Private Schools was founded to coordinate private education activities.

*Newsletter Faits nouveaux #3/94*

## ☛ India: University News

Punjabi University will set up a department of fine arts and a department of environmental studies beginning in the academic year 1995-96. The university also will set up a research center for the development of women's studies.

Tezpur University will introduce a master's degree in business administration under the School of Management Science from the next academic session.

The All India Management Association Centre for Management Education (AIMA-CME), established in New Delhi in 1993, has become the country's second largest provider of management education through open/distance learning. AIMA-CME also acts as a national center for conducting management admission and aptitude testing for entrance to management programs and the management profession. The Management Aptitude Test (MAT) is offered in 56 cities in India and in 12 abroad. Twenty-five university departments and management institutions agreed to use MAT scores during 1994.

*University News, 10/31/94*

## ☛ Israel to Add Higher Institutions

By the turn of the century more than a half dozen new institutions are likely to be awarding bachelor's degrees,

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nearly doubling the number of degree-granting institutions in Israel, which now has seven universities offering undergraduate education.

Some of the new institutions will come into being as a result of planned expansion by the higher education establishment. Others, however, will be private institutions established by academics who feel that the country's public higher education system is not growing fast enough and is not very receptive to change.

At the start of the decade when the universities enrolled a total of 76,000 students, it was clear that demographic and social changes were about to bring about a huge increase in the demand for higher education. A massive wave of immigration from the former communist bloc compounded that growing demand. Planners estimated that the system would need to provide for 40,000 more students by the end of the decade.

Through 1995-96, most of the growth will be at the universities, but the Council of Higher Education's Planning and Grants Commission wants to create a more varied system. Some existing regional extension colleges, used in the past for adult education and extension programs, will be upgraded to degree-granting institutions within the next few years.

The Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Business, Law, and Technology, a private institution, recently opened in Herzliya, north of Tel Aviv, offering programs in the fields in greatest demand at Israel's universities.

A group of academics from Bar-Ilan University has formed the Academic College of Netanya, which will open in one year in that city.

The Council of Higher Education is, by law, the only accrediting body in Israel and no institutions can offer academic degrees without its certification. The two new institutions thus far have not requested such recognition.

*The Chronicle of Higher Education 9/21/94*

## ☞ Japan Enters Hiring "Ice Age"

Not so long ago, finding work was no problem for university graduates in a country where the unemployment rate is, officially, only 2.8% of the working population—a record which is the envy of other industrial nations. The big corporations routinely sent their head hunters to campuses to hire the best recruits long before the end of the academic year. In 1993, this began to change. The situation is now so bad that some students are calling 1994 the "Ice Age."

Prospects for employment have fallen to their lowest depths, especially for young women. Daily, newspapers publish photos showing long lines of job candidates at the doors of the most prestigious businesses. In order to make a good impression, graduates have adopted the somber dress of the typical Japanese employee. The young men have been to the barber and the young women have pulled their hair into a severe bun.

This year, about 500,000 students are searching for jobs as 68.5 percent of large companies have announced reductions in recruitment. The drop in the hiring of graduates has already reached 25.3%. According to a survey of 723 top-rated companies by *Nihon Keizai*, further reductions in hiring of 9.3% in 1995 are predicted. The drop will be greatest for industrial manufacturers, particularly for automotive and steel manufacturers. Mazda, Yamaha and Japan Airlines have announced a hiring freeze next year.

Certain sectors have good prospects. Telecommunications and information have announced plans to hire more employees. IBM Japan plans to recruit 300 students next year compared to 140 this year. *Le Monde de l'Education 9/94*

## ☞ Lebanon: Beirut University College

Beirut University College has changed its name to Lebanese American University, effective October 1. The institution has campuses in Beirut, Byblos and Sidon, enrolls over 4,300 students, and is accredited by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York.

The university offers undergraduate programs in architecture and engineering, and plans to offer degrees in pharmacy next year. It also offers graduate programs in business, computer science and international affairs.

The institution was founded as a school for women in 1835, changed its name to Beirut University College in 1973, and began admitting men in 1975.

*Lebanese American University 12/15/94*

## ☞ Romania Launches First MA Course

The University of Cluj-Napoca in the Romanian region of Transylvania has launched a master's degree in British cultural studies under the joint sponsorship of the British Council and the Soros Foundation. This represents Romania's first formal master of arts degree as the country's universities try to bring themselves into line with Western education standards.

The new course, which aims to tackle a diversity of linguistic and political issues in contemporary Britain, has been set up with support from the universities of Manchester and Strathclyde and will be externally examined under the supervision of Strathclyde's culture and communications department. *The Times Higher Education Supplement 10/21/94*

## ☞ Russia's Elite Flock to Private Schools

The minute fraction of the population who can afford it are flocking to Russia's new elite private prep schools. About 500 of the expensive schools have sprouted in the past four years, charging tuition of anywhere from \$4,500 to \$12,000, while the average Russian earns \$80 a month.

The schools appeal to bankers and industrial kingpins

frantic to groom their children to fit into future careers as global entrepreneurs. At the Zhukovka Classical Humanities Gymnasium, Latin and tennis are required subjects, as is etiquette. Sundry languages are offered because the children vacation everywhere in the world.

Since 1990, when the state relaxed its laws prohibiting private schools, 190 alternative schools have appeared in Moscow alone, offering every option from Montessori-style learning to Christian Bible study. Only 17 of Moscow's 190 schools are certified to issue degrees, however, and many of the schools fail or have a very tenuous chance of survival since only about 2,000 of the 1.7 million school age children can afford them. Those who can't end up in one of the 67,000 public schools, which are crammed and often lack textbooks, repairs, or even heat.

*Newsweek 12/5/94*

## ☛ Saudi Arabia Joins Internet

The Saudi Ministry of Information recently joined Internet, offering data on the Kingdom's history, culture, government, architecture and economy. Information on each subject is supplemented by colored illustrations, maps and representative icons intended to present the user with an electronic journey through the country. Additional topics will be added as usage grows. *Saudi Arabia Newsletter 11/94*

## ☛ Saudis Strongly Promote Literacy Campaign

Since the establishment of the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education in 1954, programs which promote adult education to combat illiteracy have been an important element. The Department for Adult Education was established by the Ministry in 1954 and later renamed the General Secretariat for Adult Education. In 1992, the number of illiteracy schools for men reached 1,253, with a total of 2,504 classes, 50,483 students and 4,820 teachers. Plans are underway to open an additional 1,316 adult education schools. Special summer programs are set up at remote towns, and mobile vans travel to small villages throughout the Kingdom so all can participate.

Eradication of illiteracy among women is the responsibility of the General Presidency for Girls' Education. In 1973, there were five schools instructing 1,400 women. By 1993, a national program had increased the number of schools to 2,211, with 4,231 classes and 57,330 women enrolled.

*Saudi Arabia Newsletter 10/94*

## ☛ Senegal Curtails University Enrollment

Confusion reigns at the University of Dakar where 4,000 to 7,000 students were not allowed to resume their studies when classes resumed in November 1994. Furthermore, out of the 8,000 students who earned the *baccalauréat* in June, only 20% were allowed to enter higher education.

Last August, the authorities announced reforms aimed at streamlining education by reducing the number of repetitions of classes. Students who fail more than once in their first and second years will be dismissed from the university. In the 1993-1994 academic year, the failure rate in the first year was a staggering 85-90%. The goal is to reduce the rate to the 40-60% range.

About 20,000 students are attending a university originally designed to accommodate 3,500. The overcrowding is held to be partly responsible for the overall drop in educational standards, often termed "catastrophic" by faculty.

Since 1985, all holders of the *baccalauréat* have been allowed to enroll. But the *baccalauréat* has also lost its prestige because many students were not well-prepared for university studies. However, given the severe economic crisis and the high unemployment rate, students still prefer to remain enrolled at the university. If nothing else, it entitles them to a monthly stipend of 15,000 CAF francs (about \$30) and to inexpensive housing.

*Le Monde de l'Education 12/94*

## ☛ Thailand: PSU Opens New Faculty

The Prince of Songkla University/PSU has opened a new Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management on the island of Phuket, with an initial intake of 48 students selected from 900 applicants.

The faculty offers a bachelor's degree in hotel management, taught entirely in English, with cooperative assistance from Washington State University and Concord College in the U.S. and Griffith University of Australia. Cooperation with these institutions will be in the areas of curriculum development and visiting professors.

In addition to receiving instruction from various foreign professors, students will enter internship programs. Completion of the second year of the program and an internship gives eligibility for a Certificate of Food and Beverage Management; completion of the third year and an internship gives eligibility for a Certificate in Hotel Management; completion of the program and an internship either in Thailand or a foreign country makes one eligible for a Bachelor's Degree in Hotel Management.

*Prince of Songkla University Int'l. Newsletter 9/94*

## ☛ Tibet: Education Linked to Economic Development

Some 44 percent of Tibet's 2.2 million people above the age of 15 are either illiterate or semi-illiterate. About 88 percent of rural adults are illiterate. In terms of the education level per 1,000 people, 2.9 are college graduates, 12.3 have a high school education, 247 a junior high education, and 185.2 a primary school education.

The region now has 30 kindergartens, 2,500 primary

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