Rapporteurs' Report

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Outline of the sessions

- Session 1: Africalics: Why and How to **build the Network** - background and preliminary ideas
- Session 2: **On-going research** on LICS in Africa and perspectives for new research
- Session 3: Ideas for **new research** projects on LICS in Africa
- Session 4: How can development agencies and **donor** organisations contribute to network formation in Africa?
- Session 5: Ideas for research infrastructure and **training**

Outline of the presentation

1. Insights from **on-going research**
2. Ideas for **new research** projects
3. **Donors**: supporting network formation in Africa
4. Ideas for research **infrastructure** and **training**
5. Africalics: initial thoughts on **building the Network**

1. On-going research

- The critical role of **structural transformation** in Africa and importance of engaging in STI research that addresses structural transformation
  - Africa can learn from other developing regions that have successfully transformed their economies
  - Africa can learn from knowledge that emanates from specific sectors and the generalisation/application of such knowledge to respond to challenges in other sectors is important
  - The importance of understanding the history and political economy of each context

1. On-going research (continued)

- Exploring **catching-up routes** for Africa
  - Building technological capabilities and technological learning by looking at the experiences of other countries that have successfully taken-off
  - The importance of policy direction and commitment

- The need to **understand the nature of innovation systems** (Emerging IS)
  - We need to understand that current IS in developing countries gravitates around a limited number of key players and excludes the vast majority (high participation of governments, research centres, etc, and low participation of firms
  - The transformation of emerging IS requires strengthening the absorptive capacities
  - Importance of exploring alternative and context-specific pathways for technological take-off will emerge

1. On-going research (continued)

- **Starting from where we are**: making the most of commodities
  - Key to understand the structure of the economy (most African economies are commodity producers)
  - Exploiting opportunities to build technological and organisations capabilities in RB sectors (political pressure and economic reasons)
  - Generalising such capabilities/knowledge (application to other sectors e.g. infrastructure)
  - How to "diversify" and create other sectors around those activities
- **Need to understand the broader context**: evidence based policy research
  - Ongoing STI research rarely engages with the political economy (key in providing a grounded understanding of the dynamics that frame innovation)
  - Should we think about innovation policy or about the "politics of innovation"?

2. Ideas for 'new' research

- Need to understand the demand for new knowledge and link it to the development of technological capabilities for structural transformation
  - The sectoral structure of growth in African economies is heavily concentrated on sectors that are strikingly D&E-intensive
  - challenges for totally new perspectives and orientations of STI policy (almost no basis of policy analysis and indicators to support such policy)
  - there is a corresponding challenge for policy research by Globelics/Africalics members (several basic questions to address were outlined)

2. Ideas for new research (continued)

- The significance and role of **design and engineering** (D&E) activities
  - play several key roles in innovation systems: implementing innovation; linking R&D to implementation and; articulating effective demand for new knowledge from R&D
  - the quantitative scale of D&E activities is greater than R&D but very little is known about them and their role in the economy – not covered in R&D surveys (Frascati) or Innovation Surveys (Oslo)
- The need for context **relevant indicators** in Africa
  - Measures that give a broad picture do not capture a large part of salient features of innovation activities in the African context
  - Need for measures that allow policy orientation that is relevant to the African context (we should think about measurements and action e.g. in terms of design and engineering)
  - Need for studies to systematically tease out specific aspects of innovation in Africa

2. Ideas for new research (continued)

- Impact of unmeasured innovation: **grassroots innovations**
  - The need to focus on innovation that is generally excluded from the formal indicators
  - The critical importance of integrating demand in innovation (encouraging innovation which in turn stimulates demand)

- The need for **evidence-based innovation policy**
  - Integrating the global context (financial meltdown, commodity boom etc)
  - Need for relevant evidence for policy and planning – indicators provide a partial story and this must be augmented with sound political economy studies

3. Donors: supporting network formation in Africa

- Donors can provide both direct and indirect support to building research /innovation networks
  - Special focus on capacity building
- Donors can play an important role as "system builders"
  - Promoting mutual interactive learning across actors
  - Supporting and improving the quality of interactions across actors
- Donors can have a greater impact when they work together – e.g. producing joint databases
- Donors can support Africalics in its engagement with policy makers – which in many cases also involves capacity building (i.e. training policy makers)
- General openness to the idea of supporting both structured networks as well as more informal networks

4. Ideas for research infrastructure and training

- ***Ideas on research infrastructure***
  - Ongoing partnerships can provide good lessons for the establishment of Africalics
  - Important for African organisations (government, private sector, academia, etc) to play a key role in initiating and coordinating efforts
  - Important to have 'champions' that drive certain activities and coordinate processes
  - Importance of learning from experiences on research networks that are already operating – *Africalics as a network of networks?*

4. Ideas for research infrastructure and training (continued)

Ideas on research training

− Enrolment targets could be broadened in Africa, including PhDs and also BA and Masters students

− Important to connect training activities and theoretical advance to African needs and reality – focus on the development "value" of training

− Broaden the stakeholder basis (NGOs, policy makers, donors, etc)

− Important to strengthen the connection and linkages of universities to productive sectors and societies (formal and informal linkages and collaboration)

− Ensure the promotion of participatory research practices

− Important to experiment with training

− Africal-lics training could rely on a consortia of universities, drawing on the resources and experts from a range of institutions (African and non-African)

− Importance of reinforcing collaborations across regional Globelics academies and experts, South-South and North-South

  • For instance, planning/preparatory activities for the Africalics Academy training in Algiers (2012) – modelled on the Globelics academy and drawing from the expertise from the Globelics networks(teaching and revision, etc

5. Africa-lics: initial thoughts on building the Network

- – Africa-lics must have a critical role in contributing to the formation & training of African young scholars in the field of innovation.
- – Africa-lics can also play an important role building capacity for STI policy in Africa
- – Key role of donors in establishing the network
- – Importance of developing STI indicators relevant for policy making in Africa
- – Africa-lics activities should support efforts to: (a) consolidate ongoing and existing research insights, as well as, (b) exploring new areas of research

Suggested Activities for Africalics

1. Formation of young scholars
- Support research internships
- Summer schools for PhD students
- Africa-LICS academy focusing on Masters level
- Create a mentorship programme

2. Promotion of research capacities
- Small grants to undertake research in Africa
- Develop a regular capacity building module on STI & policy
- Support & promote joint research projects across Africa
- Funding collaborative regional research
- Organise research workshops

3. Dissemination of research outputs
- Create a database of STI research outputs
- Publication of research output
- Having a series (book series on STI)
- Produce an official journal
- Dissemination of working papers

4. Establishment of the network
- Information sharing platform
- Support mobility of scholars across Africa
- Improved networking across Universities
- Scanning and dissemination of joint funding opportunities
- Establish Africalics Center for coordination of activities
- Mapping of partner organizations
- Broad mapping of scholars working on STI in/on Africa
- Funding : role of donors

5. Addressing context-specific research gaps
- Development of conceptual frameworks and methodologies
- Good research practices & methods that engage beneficiaries and are replicable
- Case studies on innovative firms
- Develop relevant indicators for policy making
- Efforts to consolidate ongoing and existing research insights
- Explore new areas of research

Thank you for your attention!