The Complex Relations Between University, Society and State: The Ethiopian Predicament in Establishing a Service University

(Abstract)

By: Arild Tjeldvoll, Anne Welle-Strand and Fabio Bento
Publication: 2005
In: Journal of Higher Education in Africa volume 3 N° 1
The full article has 51 – 75 pages.

The Ethiopian predicament in establishing a service university is a function of several mismatches between university, society, and state: (a) Between society’s mainly low-tech agricultural production and the university’s production of academics; (b) Between the state’s need for investment finances in new economic activities and the lack thereof, (c) Between the state and the university in terms of proper governance and how organisational changes in higher education should be made; and (d) different opinions between state and university about the proper balance between individual academic freedom, institutional autonomy and accountability to society and state. Turning mismatches into constructive national development suggests that the government should attract foreign capital for new production activities, under the specific condition that the foreigners should simultaneously invest a certain percentage in the country’s higher education development. An important structural change would be to establish a dynamic and competent decision-making body at government level for science, technology and competence production. Donor countries and agencies ought to be encouraged to support Ethiopian development projects where research, tertiary-level training and business projects can work in an integrated fashion and where the Ethiopian ‘surplus’ academic workforce power could be applied abroad.

Descriptors: Ethiopia, university, governance, agricultural productivity

Contact: CODESRIA, Av Cheikh Anta Diop
X canal IV BP 3304, Dakar, 1524 Sénégal
Tel: 221 825 98 22 / 825 98 23
Fax: 221 824 12 89
Email: publication@codesria.sn
Website: www.codesria.org