

Gabon and Ghana to initiate, understudy research systems, identify areas of exchange or renew existing MoU as was the case of University of Cape Coast, Ghana (MoU: 3). Foreign Faculties have been engaged with Unilorin to facilitate Research Collaborations and Joint Conferences as seen in the case of the U6 Consortium. 'The Consortium is a collaboration of six Universities from South Africa, Ghana, The Gambia, Kenya and Nigeria. The Universities involved in this consortium are: Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (formerly Bondo University College), Kenya, Kwara State University, Nigeria, The University of The Gambia, The Gambia, University of Cape Coast, Ghana and University of Ilorin, Nigeria' (CIE Draft Report, 2014).

The Institution has been able to secure 400,000 USD worth of medical supplies and equipment from Project Cure – Head Quarters in Colorado and jointly organised the third International Conference in collaboration with the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, under the theme: "Education for Sustainable Development in Africa," between 11th and 16th August, 2013.

For many of us in the ECOWAS; the great merit of exchange has been the access it provides to other ways of thinking. Specifically, we have sought to expose our students to highly developed Western means of organizing thought and knowledge, so that these processes could then be applied to the tasks of national development. In any case, educational and cultural exchanges can also serve as a platform to learn some lessons which are highlighted below:

Lessons about Other Cultures

Experience they usually say is the best teacher. This old adage isn't just relevant here but timely because, 'to experience a foreign culture on its own terms by attempting to adapt as much as possible to new ways of doing, seeing, and thinking takes one far beyond the limited exposure one would have to that culture in a classroom or through the conventional tourist experience' (Pires, 2000:41). The views of Pires

are not mere coincidences as we have earlier asserted through the experiential learning approach that students must assume responsibility for the organization of their own learning rather than relying on more passive classroom processes. Reading about a particular culture rather than experiencing it in this context can be likened to hearing about someone and not meeting the person physically. In most cases, the earlier impressions are subjective and one usually ends up changing them by experiencing life with that person.

Edgerton (1976:7) opined that, International education has contributed greatly to the major goal of international understanding by promoting an awareness of the shared nature of most human concerns. Moreover, it has been an unparalleled means of promoting understanding of other cultures, their ways of thinking and their problems, in depth and over time (7). Below is the view of George, a Liberian post-graduate student currently studying in University of Ilorin about Nigeria: "Nigeria as a whole is a vast cultural area, and it's beautiful to know that all its cultures though in different ways; portray just one thing – respect."

From the above however, the main merit of an exchange programme experience might be that the increased understanding of another culture that the experience makes possible provides comparisons to aspects of the individual social structure.

Lessons about Oneself

It is not uncommon for people to suddenly become selfless whenever they are far away from their homeland. Someone who ordinarily does not do anything tangible back home may just develop a kind of zeal, confidence or determination that comes from nowhere and just finds himself doing extra ordinary things abroad. A steady change of environment can surely afford one the opportunity to discover oneself as captured in the words of this Ghanaian undergraduate of Unilorin: "University of Ilorin so far has been an existing experience for me.