

EU shares skills, improves

As Uganda increasingly pushes for skills-based human resource capacity that will transform the country to middle income status, the role of the European Union (EU) through the different projects running across the country cannot be underestimated.

The EU as the world's largest donor is supporting education in 40 partner countries and funding to the sector in developing countries is expected to hit 4.5 billion Euros by 2020.

Erasmus mundus

Erasmus Mundus is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims at enhancing the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with other countries.

The programme contributes to the development of human resources and the international co-operation capacity of higher education institutions in Third Countries by increasing mobility between the European Union and these countries.

The programme has such opportunities as scholarships for undergraduate and master's studies, fellowships for doctoral and post-doctoral students and fellowships for teachers and researchers.

A total of 89 Ugandans have so far benefitted from the prestigious Erasmus Mundus programme. The programme gives one an opportunity to explore postgraduate learning at different universities in two or more EU countries.

In its 30th year, the Erasmus programme supports projects, partnerships, events and mobility in the areas of education, training youth and sport.

Uganda was ranked the ninth most successful African country in the 7th EU Research Framework programme and in Erasmus Mundus. According to Ambassador Kristian Schmidt, the EU head of delegation to Uganda the Erasmus Mundus is a very competitive programme.

"You apply, so on the basis of the quality of

IN A COUNTRY WITH AN OVER 70% HIGH YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, SKILLS-BASED LEARNING HAS BEEN ARGUED TO BE THE MOST CRITICAL INTERVENTION THAT WILL MELT DOWN THESE FIGURES



The Italian Ambassador to Uganda, Domenico Fornara (centre) talking to European Union Ambassador (right) Kristian Schmidt during the Erasmus+ Conference at UMA Conference Hall on Friday, May 5



The EU ambassador addressing participants at the Erasmus+ conference at UMA last Friday

the applications and the applicants are given scholarships to study in Europe. It is one of the best programmes that Europe has. It has been there for 30 years," he said in a recent interview

What started as an exchange programme among European countries, was expanded to

cover the whole world.

"The alumni that have come back from European universities to Uganda I am sure are global citizens and they understand Europe with our weaknesses. And so for me, these are people with whom we can easily collaborate," Schmidt said.

Unlimited pool of learning areas

With an unlimited pool of learning areas to pick from, an Erasmus+ experience is said to among other benefits to boost one's self-confidence, adaptability and stronger communication skills, but also participants are able to establish professional networks.

professional capacity

ONE KEY AIM OF HIGHER EDUCATION, ACCORDING TO THE EU UNDER THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME IS TO TAKE ABLE STUDENTS TO THE STAGE WHERE THEY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR COUNTRY

According to the EU Education and Training Monitor (2016), the employability of graduates in Europe increased for the second consecutive year, by 0.9% from 2014 and 1.5% from 2013, reaching 76.9 % in 2015 (78.6 % for male graduates and 75.3 % for female graduates).

One key aim of higher education, according to the EU under the Erasmus+ programme is to take able students to the stage where they can contribute to the national development of their country as this level of education is crucial for building a strong human capital base.

As Africa and Uganda in particular grapples with high unemployment rates, having an extra skill from a unique learning environment obviously gives students, in this case with an EU training, an added advantage.

The EU prioritises a whole sector approach, from early childhood to higher education, including non-formal education and technical and vocational training, shifting the focus from access to quality and equity issues in education.

Why Europe is a preferred education destination

It is estimated that in 2012, over 1.4 million students from around the world moved to Europe for their higher education. The continent has some of the world's best universities, research and other training institutions.

According to a New York Times' 2012 list of top 100 universities, 36 of these were from Europe. These according to the EU education and training portal are reasons you should study in Europe

Shape your career

In the QS 2011 Global Employer Survey, over 60% of employers worldwide said they actively seek or value an international study experience when recruiting. By studying in Europe, you will gain the skills, knowledge and experience that employers value. With strong international business, creative and research sectors, Europe is a great place to build your career.

Compiled by Gloria Nakajubi



Students who study at foreign universities are more competitive when they return to their home countries

What makes Europe a great education destination?

Reach full potential

World-leading universities, top facilities, inspirational teaching... in Europe, you are at the centre of an international community with a passion for learning. What makes European universities so strong is the emphasis on creativity, innovation and support – helping you to reach your true potential.

World class research

Europe offers you great opportunities for research. There were 1.58 million full time equivalent researchers in the EU-27 in 2009. Over the next decade, the European Union is actively looking to attract an additional 1 million researchers.

Social support

Europe is a welcoming, friendly place for students from all around the world. Europe's universities and colleges offer support and social activities to help you feel at home and happy. Europe is also a great place to live.

Diverse cultures

Studying in Europe is not just about lectures and libraries, it is also that once-in-a-lifetime chance to discover new countries... and to discover yourself too! From the snowy north to the sun-soaked south, across Europe you will find breathtakingly beautiful landscapes, buzzing cities and vibrant cultures waiting for you.

Scholarships

European countries invest in their higher education systems to help make education affordable for students, whilst maintaining high quality standards. Across Europe, tuition fees and living costs compare very well to other study destinations... in fact, in some

European countries, study programmes are free of charge.

Diversity

The beauty of Europe is that it offers so much choice. With world-class universities, higher education institutions and research institutes, offering hundreds of bachelor's degrees, master's degree and PhD/doctoral programmes, plus short term courses to choose the experience that suits you.

Language

There are 24 official languages in the European Union. But most countries across Europe offer study programmes in English too. You will also find programmes taught in other leading global business languages such as Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic and more.

Most Europeans are multilingual. Over half of Europeans (54%) are able to hold a

conversation in at least one additional language, a quarter (25%) are able to speak at least two additional languages and one in ten (10%) are conversant in at least three.

Weather

Most of Europe has a relatively mild, temperate climate. The coldest places are in the far north and in the high mountains. The warmest places are in the far south and south-east. The weather is warmest and driest in summer (roughly June to September) and coldest in winter (roughly December to March).

Religion

The biggest religion in Europe is Christianity. But there are a number of other religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism and Buddhism. On campus, most universities have prayer and social groups representing the major religions, to help you make friends and stay connected to your faith.

Food and drink

Spanish paella, Italian pasta, French cuisine, Greek moussaka. Europe is known for its delicious specialties, but if you are missing food from home, do not worry!

Most restaurants serve local food alongside dishes from all over the world. Big supermarkets tend to sell popular ingredients from around the world, plus in larger towns you may find stores dedicated to food from different world regions.

Many countries in Europe have large vegetarian communities – for example 12% of the UK and 10% of Sweden are vegetarian. Wherever you go, you can usually find at least one vegetarian or vegan option on the menu. If not, just ask the restaurant staff – they are usually happy to cater for you.

