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**China's cooperation in education and training with Kenya:
a comparative analysis**

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China's cooperation in education and training with Kenya: a comparative analysis¹

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Summary and rationale

The aim of the research² reported on here is to study China's re-emergence as a major player in human resource cooperation with Africa. China has been widely analysed, as an investor in the developing world, including very substantially in infrastructure and extractive industries in Africa (e.g Rotberg, 2008; Foster et al. 2008; Onjala, 2008; AFRODAD, 2008). However, there has been little examination of China's key role in education and training cooperation, or in soft power with Africa. China's education cooperation with Africa goes back to the 1950s, but this paper focuses particularly on the last 20 years, and especially the period since the start of the formal Sino-African triennial conferences through the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000.

At a time when many traditional Western donors have become preoccupied with aligning and harmonising their aid in the spirit of the *Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness* (2005) and the *Accra Agenda for Action* (2008),³ China remains hesitant about even using this donor discourse. It will be useful to analyse therefore in what sense *China's African Policy* (2006) is also an aid policy.⁴ Equally, when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Goals continue to receive annual international attention through the EFA and the World Bank's Global Monitoring Reports (GMRs), it will also be useful to consider the role of the eight FOCAC targets for 2007-2009 in setting and monitoring China's collaboration commitments with Africa (FOCAC, 2006).

¹ This paper derives from five weeks spent in Nairobi, 1st July -7th August 2009. Over 60 interviews were held by Kenneth and Pravina King, in companies, development agencies, universities, ministries, and training institutes, both public and private, as well as with many Kenyans who have acquired, or are currently acquiring, training in China. An earlier version of this paper was presented at an IDS Staff Seminar on 30th July 2009 at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi.

² The project is funded by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council and is carried out jointly with Bjorn Nordtveit at the University of Hong Kong. The views expressed here are the author's and may not be attributed to the Hong Kong Research Grants Council.

³ See *NORRAG NEWS 42* for a critical analysis of the Paris and Accra discourse and agenda (accessible at www.norrag.org)

⁴ *China's African Policy* only uses the word 'aid' once, in the context of humanitarian aid, while it uses the word 'cooperation' 78 times, 'exchange' 37 times, and 'mutual' 18 times, in 11 pages (China, 2006).

If China does indeed have a cooperation policy with Africa, it will also be important to identify in what ways this might be distinctive. One possibility is that what may make China's cooperation with Africa different from the majority of other development partners is that what may well look like regular aid components are being offered to Africa but within a wider economic context of increasing Chinese investment, and often in a context of increasing Chinese presence in Africa, through migration. We shall argue that this wider context has a direct impact on the take-up of some of the elements of China's education cooperation, such as scholarships and language learning.

This research examines the scale, diversity and character of what China's human development cooperation with Africa involves. It has done so, first, by fieldwork in China with the relevant ministries and resource bases for education cooperation, but more especially by fieldwork in Africa itself. Like China's Africa policy which is Pan-African in scope, this research is looking at five key countries in North, West, East and South Africa: Egypt, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa.

It also examines a series of different dimensions of China's education and training cooperation with Africa. But the present paper illustrates these primarily from one country, Kenya, though there will be parallels drawn, where appropriate, from Ethiopia (King, 2009c) and from Cameroon (Nordtveit, 2009) In Kenya these elements of cooperation include: support to short term and long term training of Kenyans in China; university to university cooperation between China and Kenya; development of Confucius Institutes; development of education or training projects and institutions within Kenya; project-related training; and enterprise-based training.

In reviewing these different forms of educational cooperation, it will also be important to examine the modalities for their delivery. In a section of the UKFIET Conference that is dealing explicitly with 'the new politics of aid partnerships', it will be timely to consider in what sense China's developing relationship with Africa illustrates what *China's African Policy* terms 'A new type of China-Africa strategic partnership' (China, 2006: 3), and how this differs from 'the Strategic Partnership with Africa' or the partnership commitments discussed in the Paris Declaration. Equally, it will be important to consider to what extent the Pan-African, continental framework of FOCAC has made much difference to the essential bilateralism of China's commitments with individual countries.

'Even in souvenir shops in Westlands, Nairobi, I often get a greeting in Chinese from Kenyans. About two years ago, such greetings were always in Japanese.'
(Yuki Nakamura, Centre of African Studies, Japanese doctoral candidate in Kenya, to K. King, 26.01.07)

History and background of China-Kenya human resource cooperation

Although the tradition that Chinese Admiral Zhang He's fleets reached the current areas of Lamu and Mombasa on the Kenya coast in the 1500s, with some Chinese sailors settling after shipwreck, it wasn't until the celebrations of the 600th anniversary of this exploration, in 2006, that a Kenya-China training dimension developed from this early safari; Shariff, a Kenyan girl with claimed Chinese ancestry, was sent on a

China government scholarship to spend seven years in Nanjing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (PRC Ministry of Culture, n.d.).

China was one of the earliest countries to recognise Kenya in December 1963, and Kenya's then vice-president, Oginga Odinga, led the first mission to China as early as 1964 (PRC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003). But because of the growing alienation between Odinga and Kenyatta, and because of the difference in the two countries' political paths, Kenya was not on the route of Zhou En Lai's historic visit to Africa in 1964. Nor was there a Chinese bookshop in Nairobi as there was in Dar Es Salaam in 1964.

Relations between China and Kenya improved with the election of President Moi, and the first presidential visit to China took place in 1980, followed by two more in 1988 and 1994. The first visit of a Chinese president to Africa was to Kenya, with Jiang Zemin's arrival there in May 1996 (PRC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003). President Kibaki continued the tradition, with visits to China in both 2005 and 2006; and ten years after Jiang Zemin, in April 2006, President Hu Jintao visited Kenya, and amongst much else was able to celebrate the recent establishment of Africa's first Confucius Institute, in the main courtyard of the University of Nairobi.

We don't yet know who were the first Kenyans to study in China, though they were probably in the period immediately after Odinga's visits of 1960 and 1964;⁵ but we do know that in the last five years the numbers of Kenyan students going to China have risen very rapidly. By contrast, Chinese students studying in Kenyan universities have remained very small. The number of Chinese working in Kenya, however, has increased sharply. Precise figures are not known but estimates vary between 5000 and 10000.⁶ Similarly, the number of Chinese companies operating in Kenya has grown dramatically.⁷ But the total number of Chinese investment projects in Kenya would still appear to be many less than the 800 claimed to be in Ethiopia (King, 2009a: 1). Equally, the sheer number of Chinese experts supporting technical and agricultural training in Ethiopia had reached a total of almost 500 in the last 6-7 years; but there is little evidence of such grant-aided technical assistance to Kenya, reflecting possibly the very different status of Kenya's and Ethiopia's institutional development in agriculture and technology.

The focus of this paper is China's support to human resource development in Kenya. By this we don't just mean China's cooperation with the formal education sector in Kenya, such as provision of school buildings, university link projects, Chinese language training in formal settings like Nairobi, Kenyatta and Egerton Universities,

⁵ In *Not yet Uhuru* (1967: 187/8) Odinga mentions that by 1963 a thousand Kenyans had taken up offers of scholarships from the Eastern bloc, as well as from N. Korea. There was no specific mention of China, though from Odinga's earlier, 1960 trip there, he says 'It was impossible not to be impressed by China' (190). Ben Kipkorir has mentioned that three of his classmates in Makerere University went on an educational tour of China in the early 1960s; one of these is Nat Mutai, currently working in the Diatomite Mines in the Rift Valley (Kipkorir to King, 29.7.09).

⁶ By comparison there are only 800 Japanese in Kenya, which helps to explain the change in greeting from Japanese to Chinese since 2005, with which we started this paper.

⁷ For a very useful account of the names and size of Chinese firms investing in Kenya from 2000 till 2006, see Onjala 2008.

or the provision of short and long term training related to the formal education sector. We also intend to cover the whole range of short and long term training provision, and not just that linked to the needs of the Ministries of Education and of Higher Education. Beyond this, there is privately-provided Chinese language training which is growing rapidly. And there is a very wide range of enterprise-based training associated with the spectrum of Chinese companies, which span the range from the high tech Huawei, in information technology, to China Road and Bridge Corporation, to a large pharmaceutical like Holley Cotec, to vehicle assemblers like DFM, Focin and King Bird, and to a multiplicity of much smaller firms.

The purpose in this paper is to get behind the bald numbers and to ask some questions about the character and rationale of China's increasing involvement with Kenya (as with other African countries) in the last 8-10 years. This will be done by making a number of propositions about the shape and chemistry of this Kenya-China cooperation. Particular attention will be paid to the insights of Kenyans who have trained or taught in China, and to the aspirations of the many Kenyans, young and old, who are setting out to learn Chinese.⁸ Also important is the perspective of those Chinese who have spent a considerable time in education cooperation with Kenya.

The background to this analysis are the specifically education and training commitments which were made in the great Beijing FOCAC Summit of November 2006; these were to double long-term scholarships for African students from 2000 per year in 2006 to 4,000 a year by 2009. They also involved a pledge to provide short-term training to 15,000 professionals from Africa between 2006 and 2009. Young Volunteers Serving Africa were to be initiated and would reach 300 in the same period. At the same Beijing Summit, China offered to provide 100 rural schools to Africa, and promised to increase the number of Confucius Institutes in the continent, though no specific target was set for this category of support. There were other human resource commitments, such as to send 100 senior agricultural experts to Africa; set up 10 special agricultural technology demonstration centres in Africa; build 30 hospitals in Africa and provide RMB 300 million of grant for providing anti-malaria drugs and build 30 malaria prevention and treatment centres to fight malaria in Africa. We shall focus principally upon the first five of these above rather than on those which are specifically concerned with the provision of medical and agricultural cooperation. We shall not address in any detail the other major targets concerned with doubling aid to Africa, trade and investment credits, special economic zones, debt cancellation, and the reduction of tariffs on African exports to China, except to recognize that Kenya has also benefited from these, and that they certainly help to change the wider macro-economic environment within which human resource cooperation is offered by China.

Running through this account are some red threads concerning the character of China's approach to aid or development cooperation. We pull some of these together here. First, and already alluded to, China is not at ease with the discourse of aid, or of

⁸ Our interest in exploring these issues derives from a year spent in China, in 2006-7, and a curiosity, as an Africanist, about *China's African Policy* (2006) and China's role as a strategic development partner in Africa. It was also driven by surprise at the generally negative view in the Western media of what China was doing in Africa. This can be summed up by saying that allegedly China, by its strategic resource investments across Africa, was somehow undermining the good work done by the West over many years.

being seen as a member of the donor club; it much prefers to present itself as ‘the largest developing country’ helping the continent (Africa) which is ‘home to the largest number of developing countries’, to the best of its ability, in South-South cooperation (Hu, 2006). It is therefore hesitant about being drawn into donor coordination and harmonization activities. Second, despite the Pan-African umbrella of the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), China’s cooperation falls clearly into a series of bilateral commitments to individual African countries, including Kenya. There are few examples of China’s multilateralism in Kenya, and few regional East African projects.⁹ Third, like Japan, China prefers to view its cooperation commitments as demand-driven, rather than as a set of Chinese development priorities for Africa; China does not therefore have an aid agenda driven by the MDGs or by poverty reduction, good governance, and other conditionalities, as do a number of traditional donors. Fourth, there is a strong emphasis on its strategic friendship with Kenya, and on the importance of cultural exchange as well as on mutual exchange in political, economic, social and human resource arenas. This is captured in the well-worn phrase of ‘win-win’ cooperation and in the principle of ‘promoting common development’ (Hu, 2006). For many of these reasons, China does not produce a Kenya Assistance Strategy like some traditional donors, or a glossy *China in Kenya 2008* report like the Japanese, for instance (e.g. JICA, 2008).

China’s approach to cooperation with Kenya, with a focus on human resources

There may nevertheless appear to be two interwoven political aspects of China’s engagement with Kenya, as with other African countries; one derives from a long history of friendship and South-South cooperation; the other draws on China’s role as a key member of the global community with its own growing commitments to development assistance. In the first, there is the strong assertion of the importance of a two-way symmetrical accord between two developing countries, through the ‘strategic partnership’ just mentioned. This emphasis is on ‘political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange’; in this perspective, China has only provided assistance ‘to the best of its ability’ to African countries, ‘while African countries have also rendered strong support to China on many occasions’ (China, 2006: 2). This rhetoric of ‘solidarity and common development’ needs to be contrasted with that of China as a powerful but responsible member of the international community acting, for example in the present global financial crisis, ‘to minimise the damage caused on developing countries, Africa in particular’. Despite this crisis, ‘we will earnestly follow through on the various measures announced at the Beijing Summit. We will continue to increase assistance to Africa...’ (Zhang Ming, 2009: 6).

⁹ Several African embassies in Beijing talked of the importance of China supporting Africa’s Regional Economic Communities, in cross-border projects, but recognised the greater transaction costs of these. See also Davies (2008: 10).

It may be misleading, however, to contrast too sharply a South-South cooperation and solidarity approach with what the West might see as a development assistance perspective. Rather *China's African Policy* lays out a very comprehensive field of cooperation with Africa, in the political, economic, social and security arenas, and 'economic assistance' is only one small element within a wide range of ten other fields of economic cooperation, including trade and Chinese investment': 'China will do its best to provide and gradually increase assistance to African nations with no political strings attached' (China, 2006: 5).¹⁰

Similarly, most of the areas of educational, scientific, medical and social engagement with Africa are described in terms of 'exchange and cooperation' or in terms of 'the principles of mutual respect, complementarity and sharing benefits' (China, 2006: 7). In other words, *China's African Policy* does not read like an aid policy agenda at all.

At the end of 2006, in the great Beijing FOCAC Summit, the *African Policy* arguably gets turned much more into an aid agenda. The *Beijing Action Plan* which emerged directly from the Summit is still a document that focuses primarily on cooperation, mutuality and exchange. Indeed, the most common phrase in the 15-page Plan is 'The two sides',¹¹ underlying the crucial point that most of the text is the result of joint consultation within the FOCAC process. However, the eight key items which form the FOCAC agenda for the following three years, 2007-2009, are all introduced by the phrase 'The Chinese Government...'. This perhaps acknowledges that within the *Beijing Action Plan* there is a Chinese aid or assistance agenda for whose delivery China is responsible.¹² This includes all the key education and training commitments, referred to above. What do these amount to for Kenya? And what is there apart from the FOCAC commitments?

In terms of scale, China's support to formal education in Kenya per se is very slight China is not giving anything like £11 million a year to formal education as DFID does, to the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP).¹³ Even if in the most recently published *Development Cooperation Report* of the UNDP in Kenya (UNDP, 2006), China had become Kenya's second largest bilateral donor, after the United States, its support to formal education *per se* in Kenya has remained very small.¹⁴ It is also worth noting that in 2005, China's aid had increased by no less than 800% from the previous year. The two largest components of this new level of support in 2005 were rural telecommunications and power distribution. By contrast, for many years before FOCAC, China's support to formal education had consisted of a long-term university link project between Egerton University and Nanjing Agricultural University in respect of horticulture, since 1994. There had also been, since 1982 and 1983 respectively, some long-term scholarship and short-term training

¹⁰ In other words, China does not, like a number of Western donors, use the word 'cooperation' as a pseudonym for 'aid'.

¹¹ This is used 71 times in just 15 pages.

¹² For the eight targets see FOCAC 2006. Dambisa Moyo's *Dead Aid* wrongly compliments the Chinese President on aid being 'thankfully only a small component of their strategy'; in fact many of the eight targets of FOCAC 2006 could be regarded as 'aid'. See further King in *NORRAG NEWS* 42, 2009: 11. Also Brautigam 2008: 209.

¹³ DFID has been allocating £11 million to this since 2005 and is likely to continue through to 2015

¹⁴ It remained the second largest bilateral donor to Kenya in 2008.

support to study in China, and from November 2005, support to the first of Africa's Confucius Institutes – in Nairobi University.

By the time of President Kibaki's first visit to China in August 2005, the Forum for China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) had met for the second time, on this occasion in Addis Ababa in late 2003, and, as a result, long and short-term scholarships and training had been increased substantially for Africa. For instance, in Kenya, for the twenty years from 1983 to 2003, China provided short-term training for just 63 people from Kenya; but from 2004 to 2008 the number was 697 (Commercial Counsellor's Office, Chinese Embassy, Nairobi). In other words, the FOCAC process, from late 2003, produced a dramatic change in short-term training numbers, from just a handful a year to over 100 annually. This trend had been reinforced by the November 2006 Beijing FOCAC summit which increased short-term training for the whole of Africa over the triennium by 50%, and it doubled long-term training, as mentioned above. The long-term scholarships, which had been running at just some 10 a year from 1982, went up to some 40 annually from 2007 (Zhang Ming 2008: 1). This brought China's short-term training into the same category as Japan's. These two East Asian nations thus provided by far the largest component of Kenya's short-term grant-aided training provision.¹⁵

The scale and character of China's short-term training is worth analysis in its own right.

By 2009, China was offering Kenya an extraordinary range of short-term training courses. Only Japan's JICA offered a spectrum that compared with China. To get a sense of the specificity and range of China's offers, it may be useful to mention just some of these 50+ targeted short-term training courses:

- Small hydropower technology
- Hybrid rice technology for developing countries
- Developing machinery and electronic industries
- Grain security
- Marine organism culture technology
- Hybrid rice technology
- Malaria control
- Soil and water conservation
- Modern distance education
- Chinese acupuncture and moxibustion
- Management of sports facilities
- African press
- Pollution-free tea production
- Television broadcasting techniques
- Cotton breeding and management
- Modern hotel management
- Chinese for commercial officers
- Bamboo and rattan sector
- Medicinal plants

¹⁵ It would seem that the provision of short-term training is now much more commonly supported by Asian nations, including China, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Thailand and Korea than by traditional western donors with the exception of Sweden and The Netherlands.

Corruption prevention

Radio communications and digital TV technology

Tourism management

Forest law enforcement and governance. (Chinese Embassy in Kenya, 2009).

In 2009 Kenya was being offered over 50 very specific courses from China, from a total menu of over 200. The total participants would come to around 130, just as there had been 134 in 2008.¹⁶ Many courses were just two to three weeks in length, while others like the marine organism culture technology were two months, and others again like hybrid rice technology were four months. There is also evidence of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, which is ultimately responsible for short-term training, in conjunction with sector ministries, increasing the length of several of these courses and also reviewing their quality.¹⁷ As far as support to formal education *per se* is concerned, only a handful of these short-term training courses, related directly to the different levels of the education sector. These were the seminar on Vocational Education in Developing Countries; the Seminar for University Presidents in African Countries; the Seminar for Modern Distance Education; the Seminar for Primary School Masters in African Countries; and the Seminar for High School Management for African Anglophone Countries (Chinese Embassy in Kenya, 2009).

All the short-term courses were provided by particular, usually university, resource bases in China, and there is evidence of these universities building up their own capacity on Africa in order to improve this provision.¹⁸ Thus far, however, the focus has principally been on exposing participants to 'best practice'¹⁹ in approaches, technology and management in China, and not on analysing the strengths or weaknesses of institutional provision by countries in Africa. This training therefore illustrates a particular form of 'bilateralism' in which the more developed country offers access to technologies and processes in which it has some comparative advantage. These courses in fact parallel the rather widespread provision of short-term training that was once available through the UK and many other Western donors.

There has not so far been any evaluation by either country of the impact of this element of China's cooperation with Kenya.²⁰ It should be noted that in terms of aid

¹⁶ This compares to 120 Kenyans sent to Japan on some 94 group training courses, and 17 Kenyans sent to individual (order-made) courses, totalling 137 in the fiscal year April 2008 to March 2009.

¹⁷ Japan's parallel set of very specific courses are normally 1.5 months in length, and they are offered in Japan, in third countries, like Malaysia or Singapore, as well as in-country, e.g. in Nairobi. See also recommendations of the Seventh Meeting about the Work to Assist Foreign Countries in Education held by the Chinese Ministry of Education, at Zhejiang Normal University on 25 May, 2009 (Liu and Niu, 2009).

¹⁸ The Institute for African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University is perhaps the most dramatic of these examples of capacity building in China for development work and analysis in Africa. They have recruited almost 20 new staff posts in African Studies as well as 15 masters students. Both categories are progressively being sent to do fieldwork in Africa for substantial periods.

¹⁹ For a critique of this over-used term see *Norrag News 39*, accessible on www.norrag.org

²⁰ One by-product of this research is that the Chinese Commercial Counsellor's Office in Nairobi is currently evaluating the impact of the latest round of short-term training for Kenyans.

modalities, support to short-term training has high transaction costs compared to sector budget support or general budget support. While the precise mix of the training courses is negotiated annually at the country level, the offer of such training to Kenya as to other African countries is a key element in the overall FOACAC aid package of 15,000 trainees in the current three year period. Numbers for any country are set in Beijing, and there is no complementarity expected of Kenya, in the sense of Chinese coming to courses in Kenya.

Longer term scholarship provision has expanded and diversified substantially in recent years

We have already noted that grant-aided scholarship support from the China Scholarship Council (CSC) has increased to some 40 annually in the period since the Beijing Summit of November 2006. A significant part of this component is allocated to the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology for selection purposes; smaller numbers are offered to different universities, and others are offered directly to other sector ministries. No less than 5 of the current year's scholarship awards go to Chinese students to pursue their post-graduate training in Kenya. While the aspiration of the Chinese government is that educational support to Kenya should be in the mode of mutual South-South cooperation between two developing countries, there is evidence of the Kenya government providing at least two scholarships to Chinese students to study at the University of Nairobi.

Direct provision of scholarships to the Kenya Government by the CSC has been the main avenue for long-term training support to Kenya since 1982, but there has recently been substantial diversification of longer-term scholarships by Chinese institutions in Kenya. One of the most important additions has come as a result of the establishment of the Confucius Institute (CI) in Nairobi in late 2005. It has in 2009 been announced by the Beijing headquarters of the Confucius Institutes (Han Ban) that all CIs, worldwide, would have between 3-5 language scholarships to encourage the deepening of language skills and the development of local teachers of Chinese as a foreign language. Indeed, the Nairobi CI had already developed such a policy and had begun to provide a range of both shorter and longer term language training in China. Some of the present 2nd and 3rd year students in the Nairobi CI are going to go to China for a masters degree, some for bachelors, some for a year, others for a semester, and others for a month. In total no less than 49 scholarships are expected to be given over the present year (2009). These language training scholarships, though of differing lengths, number almost as many as the regular CSC scholarships:

CI-related language scholarships in 2009

- 1 for Chinese National Scholarship
- 5 for Masters Degree
- 3 for 4 year Degree
- 14 for 1 year training course
- 14 for 1 semester training course
- 12 for 4 weeks training course (Confucius Institute Nairobi, July 2009)

In addition there is now partial scholarship provision, at least to Nairobi University, from one of the main Chinese pharmaceutical companies operating in Kenya. Holley Cotec started providing these partial scholarships to students in the Faculty of Medicine some 2-3 years ago, and extended this to a further 10 students annually in

the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies in the academic year 2008-9. These cover doctoral, masters and undergraduate students, and the focus has been particularly on needy students. Equally within the long-term Egerton University – Nanjing Agricultural University link, there have been both scholarships and fellowships provided by the university in Nanjing, beyond those available from the China Scholarship Council. Finally, the very newly established second Confucius Institute at Kenyatta University, just outside Nairobi, has also been given by Beijing 9 language scholarships to select at different levels, and expects to have more in 2010.

Overall, this means that with CSC scholarships, Confucius Institute language scholarships, and Chinese university scholarships (e.g Nanjing), there must be almost 100 scholarships for Kenyans to go to China, making it now one of the largest, if not the largest, scholarship destination for Kenyans in 2009.

A further source has been self-sponsored students from Kenya to China. There are bodies such as the China Information & Culture Communication (CICC) operating to encourage study in China. This only started in 2006 with a handful of students but by 2008 it was sending 40 students to China to no less than 8 different universities. It has not been possible to secure a figure for the total number of self-sponsored students in China, but with fee levels, as of 2008, of as little as US\$ 2750 for tuition, accommodation and insurance even in a field such as medicine, few other countries may appear equally competitive as degree destinations. Apprehension about the language may mean, however, that the figure for self-sponsored students in China continues to remain much less than those in English-speaking destinations such as India and Malaysia. Nevertheless, one estimate suggests that there could be almost 300 self-sponsored Kenyan students in China at the moment; which would be more than the total of China Scholarship Council students.

The impact of long-term training in China appears to be very strongly positive. Clearly the quantitative dimension of study in China is important, and it will be possible to get more accurate figures to track the growth of self-sponsored Kenyan student numbers. But equally important is the qualitative evidence of the impact on individual students of studying in China. The students who have been interviewed so far cover a relatively small number but they have studied in China at different times from the mid 80s to the 90s, and 2000s, but with the majority in the most recent few years. Despite the requirement for the China Scholarship students to spend a full year of intensive language learning before starting their degrees, their reactions are uniformly positive about the culture of learning in China, even if there were initial teething problems in some cases. There is full acknowledgement of the very modern facilities, the easy access to the internet, but most important is the strong sense of becoming part of a very powerful learning culture. There is widespread admiration of the Chinese student work ethic, the easy access to staff, and the transparency of the assessment system. Kenyan alumni testify to the friendliness of the Chinese students, the encouragement to participate in many cultural events, but often they comment on the direct impact on their own study and work habits, and the translation of these back into their work in Kenya.²¹

²¹ A typical comment is as follows: ‘The Chinese student work ethic had a very positive impact on my keeping time and doing the right things. They were very time conscious and target driven. What I learnt was to do things ahead of schedule or right on time. No excuses

For some of the self-sponsored students who elect to go into English-medium courses, thus avoiding the additional year of language learning, the cultural immersion may be less immediate, as they may well study in international student classes with no local Chinese students. But even these seem to absorb the target-driven work ethic and the emphasis upon the crucial importance of effort and hard work which their Chinese professors encourage.

The role of the Chinese language in China's development cooperation or global strategy

There is a growing fascination in Kenya with learning Chinese, powerfully reinforced by the growing presence of Chinese business and Chinese projects.

This increasing interest in studying in China is strongly fuelled by the widening access to Chinese language learning, and this in turn is powered by the evidence of both employment and business opportunities linked to China. But we should avoid giving the impression that the growth in Chinese language learning is exclusively vocational. Chinese classes began, for example, to be available in Egerton University in the Rift Valley from as early as 1998 when the Vice-Minister of Education of China had visited the Nanjing Agricultural University link with Egerton, and when Chinese companies were much less in evidence. In fact, several Kenyan students testify to their fascination with Chinese language and culture in their own right. It is clear for a number of Kenyans, that the culture and history of China are one of the motivations for learning the language. When a beginners' class of language students in the Confucius Institute in Nairobi were asked about their main reasons for deciding to learn Chinese, the attractions of Chinese culture and learning rated almost as frequent a response as those connected to business and employment opportunities in Kenya and China. Some saw the link between understanding the culture and history and unlocking the secrets of China's development path. One put it differently: 'Chinese culture is very diverse – like a hard nut that you just have to crack!'²²

There are an increasing number of centres where Chinese can be learnt in Nairobi alone. These would include the Regional Centre for Tourism and Foreign Languages, Kenya Institute of Professional Studies, Utalii Institute, China Information & Culture Communication (K) Ltd, Aviation College, and Air Travel. In all, there are at least 10. It should be noted that there are several Kenyans teaching Chinese in these institutions, who themselves have received language training through scholarships in China. In addition, and most importantly, there is the Confucius Institute in the University of Nairobi, the newly established Confucius Institute in Kenyatta University, and the Confucius Classroom associated with China Radio International.²³

Outside Nairobi, we have already mentioned Chinese language training in Egerton University, but, intriguingly, Chinese is also being made available in the primary schools of Kisumu East, in Nyanza Province, through an agreement reached between

about missing targets. I can't remember any occasion when a Chinese student came late. So I came back with these attitudes to Kenya (former language student in China).

²² Here is a typical comment: 'I find the Chinese language to be unique and interesting and they have a very rich culture which I enjoy learning about' (2nd year student in Confucius Institute, University of Nairobi, 5th August 2009).

²³ China Radio International offers to both English and Swahili speakers in the Nairobi area the chance to listen to and learn a little Chinese twice a day for very short periods.

the local MP and the Chinese Embassy to teach Chinese language and culture to the pupils as an extra-curricular activity. Though this is only a pilot project for the moment, it is just one illustration of a series of calls that have been made to the Chinese Embassy to provide Chinese language teachers. It is a demand that will be further met in September 2009 by the first five of China's Young Volunteers Serving Africa to come to Kenya. These are being provided as part of the FOCAC package, organised through the Ministry of Commerce as a grant, and will be allocated to Chinese language teaching in Kenya's universities, including Moi, Nairobi and Egerton.

There has also been a long-term interest in establishing a Chinese School in Nairobi, which, like other international schools, could be used both by the growing Chinese community, making family life more available in Kenya, as well as by interested Kenyans.

The Confucius Institute in Nairobi illustrates the multiple facets of China's offer of language training, with links to culture, history, community interaction, and overseas study.

The Confucius Institute (CI) in Nairobi is a good example of the multiple interactions of language, culture and further study. The CI does of course provide language instruction at basic and intermediate levels, and thanks to its presence in the Department of Linguistics and Languages, it will from September 2009 be possible to study Chinese at degree level. But its offer of language is closely linked to many different aspects of Chinese culture, including the celebration of festivals, the teaching of martial arts, opportunities for interaction with members of the wider Chinese community in Nairobi, lectures on Chinese culture and history, and, of course, a close link to opportunities to travel to China for further training, and for international Chinese language and culture competitions such as China Bridge.

The Nairobi Confucius Institute, like most others, links a major university in China with the Institute in Africa. In the case of Nairobi this is Tianjin Normal University. So it is there that students will go for further language training, and it is to Tianjin Normal that three staff from Nairobi have already gone there to teach Swahili as part of the wider exchange relationship, anticipated in the 2006 Beijing Action Plan of FOCAC (China, 2006: 12).

The role of the Nairobi CI will be further enhanced later in 2009, by its hosting the continental conference of all the 23 CIs currently operating in Africa. This Pan-African dimension of the CIs in Africa is given an international perspective every year by the world gathering of all the CIs in China. These events raise the profile of CIs much beyond a regular language training institute. These wider connections and aspirations of Confucius Institutes may make it sometimes difficult for a CI to be treated just like another ordinary language department in its host institution.²⁴

A further example of these multiple facets of the Nairobi CI is that it has played a key role in brokering a connection between the Tianjin Traditional Medicine University

²⁴ For instance the director of the CI in Nairobi is termed the Chinese Dean, and his counterpart is the Principal of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Interestingly in terms of status, the director's car has a diplomatic plate.

and the Medical Faculty in the University of Nairobi. This will lead to the provision of an intensive short course in Nairobi in November 2009.²⁵

In terms of aid modalities, the CI is hard to position; the official rhetoric of CI headquarters in Beijing is that the establishment of CIs is demand-led, with China responding to requests from University presidents or vice-chancellors. They do appear in some cases to have emerged as a result of high level agreements between the Ministry of Education in China and a corresponding Ministry in Africa. But they cannot easily be described as merely grant aid projects; the host university in Africa (or elsewhere) provides the premises, while China provides the staff, but the staff are paid and housed by the African partner, even if some of them may get a top-up from their home university. The same is true of the Kenyan staff teaching Swahili in Tianjin Normal University; they are paid and housed by their host university. However, what makes it difficult to identify the CI as a symmetrical university link project is that there are, as we have seen, multiple scholarships in the gift of the CI, and the CI in Nairobi has been responsible for the development of a complete language laboratory, with an associated technician. In addition, there are plans for the Nairobi CI to make possible the total refurbishment of several lecture theatres with modern IT equipment. In addition, the CI brings into the University of Nairobi a sum of around US\$ 150,000 per year. And there are even plans for the capital development of a building where the CI would be housed as part of a new Centre for Chinese Studies.²⁶

Some of this ambitious planning may be associated with the fact that the Nairobi CI has been named 'an advanced CI' for two years running, and Nairobi University's vice-chancellor is now a member of higher CI Han Ban Council in Beijing. All of this makes it difficult neatly to pigeon-hole the CI as a kind of British Council, Alliance Française, USIS or Goethe Institute. Like much in China's international outreach, it is simply a different model, and certainly not one that can easily be termed an aid project. More than a hundred CIs currently operate in the United States alone, and there are many others in Europe, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and Australia.²⁷

One of the most remarkable aspects of China's presence in Kenya has been the rapid and dramatic interest in the Chinese language. This cannot be interpreted as the result of some carefully orchestrated strategy from Beijing. Even if the Confucius Institutes are key elements in this interest in learning Chinese, they were not themselves examples of grants by China to Kenya, but were responses to Kenyan university and

²⁵ In the private sector, this provision of multiple services in the same institution can be seen in the China Information & Culture Communication (Kenya) Ltd, in Nairobi; it provides language training with the opportunities for self-sponsored study in China in 8 different public universities, as well as encouraging shopping in China, through low cost flights.

²⁶ Currently there is only one Centre for Chinese Studies in Africa, in the University of Stellenbosch

²⁷ There has been a debate in Australia about the need for universities to be 'wary of Confucius Institutes' as sources of Chinese Communist Party propaganda; but this has been roundly refuted by the Director of the CI in the University of Melbourne (Xu Guangming to K.King quoting Maslen, G. 'Australia: Warning – be wary of Confucius Institutes', 2nd December 2007.

ministry initiatives. Arguably, a great deal of the popularity of these Confucius Institutes derives directly from the presence in Kenya of a wide range of Chinese firms as well as the growing opportunities many Kenyans perceive in doing business directly with China.²⁸

Equally the presence of China Radio International (CRI) in Nairobi, first as a Bureau and now as the Africa Headquarters of CRI, is a further reinforcement of the Chinese language, as well as of a non-Western interpretation, in English, Swahili and Chinese of news events in Africa and internationally. A rather different aspect of China's soft power in Kenya is of course the presence of both the Nairobi Bureau of the Chinese news agency, Xinhua, as well as of its Africa Regional Bureau, with some 30 professional staff.

Training in the Chinese private sector in Kenya

Training through Chinese enterprises in Kenya covers an increasingly wide range from information technology, to vehicle assembly, textiles and construction.

There is great diversity of training across the many different types of Chinese firms currently in Kenya. With the information technology systems' provider, Huawei, there is a fully fledged regional training centre in Nairobi's industrial area, which provides training to the clients who purchase their systems. The majority of the training is done by Kenyan engineers to other Africans in the client firms, with only some occasional training being provided by a specialist from China. Equally, there is some training provided on-site, some in China and some in the region.

With China Road and Bridge Corporation (Kenya), which is arguably the largest Chinese employer in Kenya, with some 5000 local employees, and some 100-150 Chinese employees, again there is a mix of training, with the bulk being on-site, but with a number of some 50 Kenyans being sent to a Highways University in China, not for degrees, but for exposure to large-scale construction sites in China.

In other enterprises such as textiles which is a very price-competitive but not skill-intensive industry, there is probably not very much scope for training off the job. The same would be true of vehicle assembly, where general skill levels are not high, and where there would be constraints of language on both sides if some of the more high-skilled African repair-and-maintenance workers were sent to China.

Differences in Chinese and Kenyan labour practice come up frequently in discussions of enterprise-based training. Paralleling the experience of Kenyan students in China with the work ethic of local students in China, there is felt initially to be a wide gap in work practices between China and Kenya. There are different approaches to overtime and working hours, as well as to timing and target-orientation. There is a recognition by Chinese officials that the transfer of Chinese labour practices to Kenya can lead to friction, and they provide advice about this. On the other hand, there seems to be a good deal of admiration by Kenyans for the Chinese determination to start and finish a job on time and on budget, and, as with the students, an adoption by several

²⁸ Kenya Airways flies three times a week to Guangzhou. But the bulk of the passengers at the moment are coming from West Africa (Nigeria) rather than from Kenya.

Kenyans interviewed of some of the accepted Chinese work norms, once they had finished working for the Chinese.²⁹ It would be interesting to follow up Kenyans who had started up on their own, after experience of working for Chinese firms. This would parallel the many examples in Kenya of local entrepreneurs moving into self-employment after a period of experience in Kenya's many Indian companies.

We should not pass from this brief discussion of enterprise-based training without mentioning an apparent contradiction to the admiration of Chinese as hardworking; this is the rather widespread allegation, in quite a number of our interviews, that Chinese contractors use prison labour from China. This rumour was never supported by any evidence by those mentioning it,³⁰ but usually came up in a discussion of how Chinese firms manage to undercut the competition. It may well derive in part from the highly disciplined character of Chinese labour, and the tendency for them to be housed in completely separate quarters, in construction projects. It could be useful for Chinese officials in Kenya to be aware of the allegation, although there will surely be an inclination to refer to the Chinese saying: there is no need to start protesting your innocence if you are not guilty.

Positioning China's aid within the wider development assistance environment

China's development cooperation agenda is not easily disentangled from its wider presence in Kenya

China, unlike India, makes it into the UNDP's 2006 *Kenya Development Cooperation Report*, as mentioned earlier, and clearly a number of the items that we have discussed, and others that we have not, may readily be defined as official development assistance (ODA). For example, most Chinese development assistance is handled by the Ministry of Commerce, and, most obviously, the aid projects at present would cover several of the FOCAC targets, for Kenya and the whole of Africa. Most of these are thus handled by the Economic and Commercial Counsellor's Office. Clearly, Kenya's quota of China Scholarships and short-term training programme would constitute aid, though the long term scholarships are ultimately under the Ministry of Education rather than the Ministry of Commerce which covers short-term training, and these two elements are thus handled in the two different locations of the Chinese Embassy in Kenya. Aid projects that involve construction, and therefore contracts, are all handled by the Ministry of Commerce, and thus by the Commercial Counsellor's Office in Nairobi. But China's Youth Volunteers Project is also under the Commercial Counsellor's Office though it has no capital dimension.

Those projects that do involve construction would cover the building of the new, grant-aided hospital in Kayole, a suburb of Nairobi, and the malaria eradication centre associated with it. Both of these are elements of the eight FOCAC commitments. Even the two rural schools allocated to Kenya, also under the FOCAC process (in

²⁹ This confirms the finding by Sautman and Yan (2008: 11) that no less than 70%+ of their sample in eight countries picked out 'hardworking' as their key impression of the Chinese in their country.

³⁰ See also Alden's comment: 'Notably, the study found no evidence of the often decried use of 'prison labour' by the Chinese' (2007: 21)

Embakasi in Nairobi, and on the Kisii/South Nyanza border) fall under the Ministry of Commerce, as they involve construction contracts.

Not all the items in China's current portfolio of grant aid and concessional loan projects are connected to the FOCAC process. But in recent years, Kenya has certainly benefited from the concessional loans and the preferential export buyer's credit associated with the FOCAC summit of 2006. For example these have supported the Nairobi Eastern and Northern By-pass, and the two phases of the Kenya Power and Distribution System Modernisation. There has also been the construction of the maize flour processing plant in Bomet, and it is clear that the current construction of a 112 bed hospital in Kayole is clearly a major aid investment under FOCAC. However, it seems very unlikely that that China uses the FOCAC – Non-FOCAC distinction in its bilateral discussions with Kenya or with any other African country, or neatly divides its current portfolio into FOCAC and Non-FOCAC-related.

In terms of soft power, for example, the Confucius Institute may appear to be a clear example of aid, but in fact, as noted above, it is more accurately a partnership project with the University of Nairobi, or Kenyatta University. The Kenyan institutions clearly do make a financial contribution and a contribution in kind, while the CI headquarters in Beijing makes a substantial annual grant as well as supporting an array of further training in China, and hosting some of the associated conferences mentioned earlier. The same would be true of the Nanjing Agricultural University-Egerton University long-term link programme; it is more of a partnership project than a straightforward example of grant aid.

The relatively small scale of these formal education projects, compared to some of the other bilateral donors, helps to explain why China is not a participant in the Education Donors Coordination Group. The relatively substantial support to short and long-term training is by no means all connected to the formal education sector, but covers a very large number of government bodies and ministries in Kenya. At the same time, China's major presence in the road sector explains its participation in the donor working group associated with roads and transport.

Character and distinctiveness of China's support to Kenya in HRD

What has been unusual and hopefully useful in this preliminary account of what China is doing in a single sector in Kenya is that it illustrates the multiplicity of elements that make up the cooperation profile of even one rather small sector of Chinese engagement with Kenya. It should also be recalled from the eight FOCAC targets that there is no preoccupation with formal education as a goal in its own right as in the Education for All Dakar Goals; rather education is part of a much wider human resource Goal 8, covering all professional fields but including science, agriculture, health and volunteering.³¹

³¹ 8. Over the next three years, train 15,000 African professionals; send 100 senior agricultural experts to Africa; set up 10 special agricultural technology demonstration centres in Africa; build 30 hospitals in Africa and provide RMB 300 million of grant for providing artemisin and building 30 malaria prevention and treatment centres to fight malaria in Africa; dispatch 300 youth volunteers to Africa; build 100 rural schools in Africa; and increase the number of Chinese government scholarships to African students from the current 2000 per year to 4000 per year by 2009. (Hu, 2006)

First, there are items such as the scholarship and short-term training support that go back to the very early 1980s. Both of these modalities were adopted and dramatically expanded by the FOCAC process in 2003 and again in 2006. Second, both these modalities were allocated overall targets for Africa of 4000 and 15,000 respectively to be reached by the end of 2009. It is clear that individual African countries can do little about the implementation or evaluation of these targets; only the Chinese FOCAC Follow-up Committee is readily in a position to review progress towards these targets overall.³² Third, China had been supporting Chinese language teaching since 1996 in Cameroon, and in Kenya since 1998. These individual initiatives became potentially institutionalised with the development of the Confucius Institute process in 2004. But it is important to note that the Confucius Institutes, though they were included in the FOCAC Beijing Action Plan of 2006, were not allocated any specific target numbers. This was entirely appropriate as the Institutes are meant to reflect a responsive demand-driven process by all interested countries. The 100 rural schools is a different modality again; it does not build on a tradition like Japanese JICA of years of school building in the developing world. It certainly is not in the response mode, as few African countries would make 2-3 rural schools a priority for Chinese assistance; nor is it in the category of being highly visible such as sports stadia, hospitals, parliaments etc. More will need to be known about the origin of this particular element in the text of the Beijing Action Plan,³³ as well as about their significance once constructed.³⁴ The final element of the FOCAC agenda that has a link to education and training is the Volunteers Programme. Again, this is a new and different modality, and thus far has only touched a handful of African countries such as Ethiopia, where almost a 100 of the targeted 300 young volunteers for the triennium 2007-9 have been sent. In Kenya at any rate the first group appear to be destined to promote Chinese language teaching in the university sector.

These five elements which are all related to education and training – how do they look against the aid effectiveness criteria associated with the Paris Declaration?³⁵ Doubtless, the FOCAC process is one that has allowed targets to be discussed with the African ambassadors' group in Beijing and with African ministers (and presidents) at the triennial summits. The entire FOCAC process was originally designed with the very ambitious goal of promoting the African engagement with a new international political and economic order, as well as to further China-Africa cooperation in trade and economy; so it was certainly about African *ownership* of the international agenda at the highest level. As far as *harmonisation* is concerned, the FOCAC process is really a self-contained system organised around a single 'donor' but harmonised across a whole continent. It would be too much to expect this to be further harmonised with other development partners as well. But we have noted earlier that although the overall targets of FOCAC are agreed at a high level, it continues to be the Chinese Government, through bilateral discussions, which determines what any particular country will receive from the overall FOCAC targets. And as far as *managing for results* is concerned, there is no doubt that the FOCAC

³² For a more detailed analysis of the FOCAC process, see King 2009b.

³³ For a discussion of some of the options for implementing this most intriguing of the FOCAC targets, see King, 2006.

³⁴ In the case of the two schools in Kenya, they are not yet built, only their location is known.

³⁵ See further Formica on 'aid effectiveness with Chinese characteristics', *NORRAG NEWS* 42, 43

framework presents the African partners – or indeed anyone else interested in the achievement of targets – with a very specific time-bound set of agreed goals on which China itself can be judged at the end of 2009, at the next FOCAC ministerial Summit. This of course is more than can be said about the G8 commitments to Africa made in 2005 in Gleneagles or about individual donor responsibility to deliver on the EFA Dakar Goals or the MDGs.

In a way, it should be acknowledged that though China has not set out to harmonise its procedures with other donors, and though it continues to work in the project modality with its own reporting systems, and does not explore sector-wide support to education in Kenya or elsewhere, it has, uniquely among donors, set out its minimum continent-wide targets in discussion with all African countries. Most observers expect China to deliver on these in November 2009, and most African countries are aware that China has gone far beyond these agreed targets in undertaking bilateral projects with them. It could well be that FOCAC, representing China's new type of strategic partnership with Africa, is better known than the Strategic Partnership with Africa which was established in 1987, and has the standard political and economic governance criteria.³⁶

Conclusion

This preliminary account of China's engagement with human resource development in Kenya has not yet itself fully engaged with the useful literature that has emerged from Kenya on China-Kenya relations in these last 2-3 years. But even at this early stage of analysis it would appear that Sautman and Yan's review of the rather positive perspectives of Kenyans on the potentially beneficial impact of the rise of China on Africa would be confirmed by our study (Sautman and Yan, 2008). We also agree with the tenor of much of Katumanga's report for ACORD, including one of his conclusions that 'In general Chinese engagements are positive, misgivings are temporary, and basically a managerial issue that can be resolved given the existing political will on the side of the Chinese' (Katumanga, 2007: 133). We would confirm with him that the presence of an *Africa Policy* on China's side (2006) needs something more of a China Policy on the African side, and not just the series of bilateral arrangements between China and each African country. So far the FOCAC process has not really led to regional or Pan-African positions taken by African states; it will remain to be seen what is the African reaction to China's no doubt successful implementation of the current 8 FOCAC Goals, to be discussed at the next Ministerial Meeting in Egypt in November 2009. Furthermore, on the analysis of China's aid to Kenya, we would largely agree with Onjala's useful discussion of this, as part of a larger Kenya case study for the African Economic Research Consortium, though we doubt his suggestion that Chinese 'aid might hurt Kenya in the long run' (Onjala, 2008: 42). Finally we would agree with McCormick (2008: 88) that much more empirical work is needed on the impact of China's aid, in the way that Kenyan research has focused on China's trade and foreign direct investment. This paper is just

³⁶ NEPAD, the UNECA and the DAC are joining together to develop a process of mutual accountability wherein African governments commit themselves to certain standards of political and economic governance, and developed countries commit themselves to increased aid, improved aid effectiveness, open markets and a program to deal with debt issues (Strategic Partnership with Africa, accessed 27.8.09).

the beginning of a discussion about the impact of China's training aid. We trust it will raise a number of issues for debate and further analysis, and not least on the impact of China's growing involvement in overseas training of Kenyans, on the many ramifications of Chinese language learning in Kenya, and on the reinforcement of China's soft power by many different Chinese institutions in Kenya, which deserve study in their own right.

We have the impression from this Kenya study that China is on a learning curve as far as its delivery of assistance at the country level is concerned. Politically and strategically, China is in Kenya for the long term. It wants to know more about the impact of what it is currently supporting, and how this might relate to what other development partners in Kenya are doing. Cooperation with other donors rather than competition is the name of the game.³⁷ As to one of the concerns that prompted our initial interest in this research, whether China was undermining the West's good work in Africa, we shall let a 2008 report by AFRODAD have the last word:

The discourse on whether Chinese aid in Africa is irresponsible or not conceals the realities of all donors' agenda in their delivery of foreign assistance. It sets up western aid as ideologically and morally better. This is no longer helpful to Africa. In fact, suggesting that China has just suddenly discovered Africa for its own motives is not only selfish and opportunistic but ignores the longer history of Chinese solidarity with Africa particularly during its struggle against colonialism. (AFRODAD, 2008: 6)

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