

Extension Work and the Dissemination of Research Outputs

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of Research for Uptake and Utilisation
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Key Points about the ACU

We Are:

- **OLD** – First inter-university organisation in the world
- **BIG** – Over 500 members; 97 in Africa
- **DIVERSE** – Majority of members from Low and middle income countries
- **IN ACTIVE CONTACT WITH OUR MEMBERSHIP** – Frequent communication and surveys
- **NETWORKED AT MULTIPLE LEVELS** – Junior and senior level staff, administrators, and academics

Our Key Networks

- Research Managers
- Human Resource managers
- Public Relations and Communications
- Extension and Community Outreach
- Libraries and Information Management
- Graduate Employment (from 2009)

University Extension Work : Key Issues

- What is it?
- Is it important to universities?
- Who does it?
- What are the constraints?
- Does it have the potential to contribute more?

Definitions of University Extension Work

‘Scholarly and Professional Practices that involve individuals, organisations or communities outside the traditional boundaries of the university’

‘Scholarly activity in which a university’s teaching and learning are integrated with research activities that involve the community as genuine partners’

‘Activities undertaken by university staff and students that aim primarily to engage with local communities and to strengthen community development, economic development and to facilitate knowledge transfer’

Is it Important?

To Universities

- Community service should receive fitting acknowledgement at the University alongside teaching and research, and this acknowledgement should be obvious from factors such as management time, funding, effective co-ordination and effective feedback.
- Community service should be seen as an important catalyst for renewal at the University.
- Alliances and partnerships with organizations outside the University should be proactively sought out.

Put simply, if Ghana is to achieve competitiveness in the future then it is essential to expand and improve education and training especially at the tertiary level. Above all else, it is increasingly imperative that the three core functions of tertiary institutions – teaching, research and extension services – make a more relevant and tangible contribution to the improvement of the standards of living of the nation as a whole.

University of Ghana

To Development . . .

‘Extension workers have the potential to reach out to disadvantaged communities, to bridge gaps between social groups and to provide them with the relevant knowledge to benefit from a range of social and economic opportunities,

BUT

‘communication methods often remain outdated, communication between extension workers is often under realised and much activity is at risk of being poorly coordinated’

World Bank publications

Who does Extension Work?

- Full time professionals
- Extension 'professors'
- Academic staff
- Students
- 'Enthusiasts'

. . . And universities are only part of the picture

What are the Constraints?

ACU Survey of Extension Workers (2008)

- Lack of funding*
- Lack of resources*
- Lack of suitably trained staff
- Lack of time*
- Lack of Leadership*

* *Indicates rated more strongly in Africa than Asia*

Accra Seminar (2008)

- Effective training
- Lack of incentives
- Lack of internal coordination
- Lack of confidence / communication skills
- Little capacity to evaluate impact

University Extension as a Channel for Research Dissemination : Pros and Cons

Pro

Commitment of institutions

Large numbers involved

Direct link to research outputs

Identified success stories

Con

But lack of internal leadership, funds, coordination

But many not trained or incentivised

But lack the means of communication

But little means of measuring overall effectiveness

ACU Extension Network

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