ICT AND CAPACITY BUILDING: THE CONTRIBUTION OF INTERUNIVERSITY COOPERATION TO THE TRAINING OF GLOBAL AND LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECTORS

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The choice to once again dedicate some time to the theme of E-Learning as a possible strategic aspect in inter-university cooperation has root in the consideration of a nature generally relative to the theme of relations between North and South. It concerns the importance of the fact, "knowledge", as precondition of every project of development that could be supported and maintained. Acknowledging the fact of knowledge is strategic in every action of development. It means that every action of development must be concerned with "teaching to do". In this sense the strength of forms of transmission of knowledge must be taken advantage of, from more informal levels to auto or self-learning up to those levels that are more institutional and related to university education. It is typically the elevated level - the university education - that has been the object of reflection in the Panel under consideration. Through the four expositions, quite different in approaches and in the speakers' backgrounds, questions are raised on the actuality and the possibility that the development of the African continent could consider.

The exposition of SPREAFICO presents the networks of possible project of E-learning in Africa. It is a reflection developed from one internal department of the Catholic University of Milan (CREMIT) dedicated to the education in Media and Information Technologies. There are two areas of research and of intervention by the Centre. The first is the Media Education (education to the, with the and for the media, in school and outside-school, from contexts of formal education, to family, to informal education); while the second is Education Technology (with particular emphasis on the themes of integration of technologies in the didactics, to the design and evaluation of processes of formation in E-learning, to moderation of communication on line and to E-tutoring). CREMIT has among its goals that of maintaining an international opening. For instance the partnership with the Shalom College of Father Kizito in Nairobi; the collaboration with different Brazilian Universities; the participation on line MENTOR, etc.. Its hope is to be able to insert in international network research and funding interests. Despite various attempts, CREMIT has until now not succeeded in commencing effective experiences of inter-university cooperation in Africa, conserving still a sure hope to succeed one day. SPREAFICO's proposal seeks to present a possible realizable operative modality in an African context.

The exposition of INZOLI AND ZOUYA has instead sought to put to light the sense today and in the African university context the promotion of E-learning forms. It is clear that today the elaboration of knowledge and of its transmission is strictly connected with development of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies). The new instruments of information and communication have the power, on one hand, to reduce the threshold of accessing knowledge (operating in a direction of democratization of knowing) and, on the other, to accelerate enormously the possibility of exchanging (surpassing, at least virtually, a good series of borders). These two novelties can still have a strong impact on the world of African universities in which often times a vertical and hierarchical model in the pedagogic structuring of formation predominates. The fore lesson in this model is comparable to the logic more like that of a seminary where the corpus of knowledge acquired by a student is evaluated heavily on the grounds of a professor's lesson. The introduction of the ICT can put in question this model through a new pedagogy of learning based on a student's active role and on a professors' more orientative than directive role. In line with a slogan coming out of the discussion, the ICT cannot be reduced to a process of alphabetization of information. It asks for rethinking of the didactic methodology.

It is only in the exposition of ELLERANI AND MENDOZA that the prospective more operative on the E-learning has been brought to the fore. ELLERANI AND MENDOZA have added a voice to a complete experience that has involved the network of the Selasian University of Latin America. On practical objective the Edulife foundation has been able to put the proper platform of the E-learning at the disposition in order to stimulate comparison and debate among the universities which have otherwise collaborated less among themselves. A remarkable motivation of the teaching staff and the grip of knowledge of intellectual capital of notable calibre are among the results that can be realized.

The exposition of YASSIN AND SESANA poses a question on how Information and Technologies of Communication (ITC) can be factors in promoting political participation, particularly in unstructured contexts of large zones of instability and war that involve the contemporary Africa wars.

At the end of the panels two views came out quite strongly.

a) The first regards the importance of giving adequate attention to teachers and professors, who constitute the true strategic target for the operation of the entire African university population. In fact in the course of the discussion, the true and primary beneficiaries of all inter-university cooperation have alluded to. A real

modernization of the African university system and a concrete proposal of E-learning will be an illusion without direct and pivotal involvement of the teaching staff. Such involvement must however take into consideration the real danger that the professor statute has gradually suffered beginning from the 90s.

b) We are living in a transition that is profoundly modifying the operative modalities and the same sense of the E-learning, and today it is difficult tell which form it will take in future. Rivoltella reminds us that if it is true that we are confronted by normalization of the E-learning in the sense that no one questions it and puts it into discussion because of its integration in the processes of formation, it is important to speak of it in terms of its evolution. In fact *"one season has finished and it happens that another has began. Those who give information of this transition are already catching a glimpse and are closely tied not only to the social affirmation of the instruments of the Web 2.0, but also to the awareness (that begins to emerge) of the fact that typically these applications offer concrete possibility of application to the same processes that are interested today in the normal E-learning. By this way, we are thinking of the diffusion of the scholastic blogs, the adoption of wiki technology as substitute to the Intranet company in the small- media enterprises (by this way the software open source T-Wiki is becoming a true and proper case - cfr. in Internet, URL: http://twiki.org), but also in the adoption of Google Apps as platform of Web services on the part of many Italian universities among which are the University of Messina, Ferrara and Camerino, as it is already happening in the USA at the Arizona State University or in Europe at the University of Linkoping in Sweden"*[1].

To an Africa, extraordinarily receptive to the new ITC but structurally still weak to enjoy fully the positive impact on entire the organisation of society and economy, the E-learning has still more to give. The African condition would not afford to be isolated by such projects. Projects, like forms of technological assistance, should not cut off, but seen as an opportunity for new cultural sociality in which partners involved.

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[1] Rivoltella P.C., *Dopo la formazione a distanza: tecnologie, educazione e formazione in Italia (1995-2008). Educ. Soc.* [online]. 2008, vol. 29, n°.104, pp. 851-864.

POSSIBLE AREAS AND CRITICAL ELEMENTS
FOR BUILDING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INITIATIVES
IN EDUCATION AND BLENDED LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

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ABSTRACT

Training sessions for teachers in the entire school system (primary, secondary, school and university) are the basis for a long lasting development in the emerging countries and it is of high interest both for Private and Public authorities that work in the (abovementioned) emerging countries.
There are different and many approaches to tackle this kind of topic. CREMIT wants to provide a contribution through the ELIA project in order to provide support to this fascinating and complex issue.
In this scenario CREMIT has developed since long time its own project called ELIA (E-Learning in Africa) that integrates many results of research in the field of innovative teaching methods and the use of social media.
The topic to be developed on this occasion is not so much a description of the contents of the project ELIA play as an analysis of the feasibility conditions and the difficulties encountered in the chain of logic design and implementation of projects of this nature. In other words, we intend to present a series of internal and external elements to the system of development cooperation on which you can act in our view for a positive evolution of the theme.
Finally, a note on methodology and culture of fundamental importance for the understanding of the project: those who work in the field of the development of ICTs and especially the new media and social networks have learned that you can only approach a "descriptive" and "not-normative" as the cultural and technological changes are rapid and fluctuating. Even our project ELIA is the son of this approach and its continuous progression and transformation we are concerned and passionate about.

KEY WORDS: *Digital literacy, education, digital divide, ICT for development, discovery learning, didactics, Blended Learning*

PREMISES

Training sessions for teachers in the entire school system (primary, secondary, school and university) are the basis for a long last development in the emerging countries and it is of high interest both for Private and Public authorities that work in the abovementioned countries.

There are different and many approaches to this kind of topic. CREMIT wants to provide a contribution through the ELIA project in order to provide support to this fascinating and complex issue. We decided to focus our attention on three main words to clarify the project and to introduce our operational proposal.

- *E-Learning*
  We believe that the systems of training production (modules and paths) through the ICT have reached a good level of ripen (even if still growing). Through the e- Learning we mean both the existing technologies to transfer knowledge and the teaching itself (pedagogical knowledge transfer) that can create the learning environment (teaching). In particular, it is important to underline the tendency to use web 2.0 instruments both for formal and informal education activities and in general for knowledge transfer.[1]
- *Emerging countries*
  In the present geopolitical frame, the target for countries considered emerging (steady development grades) is very flexible. For sure we can consider among them countries in the Middle East and North Africa as well as some Far East or Latin American countries (BRICS countries).
- *Developing countries*
  Despite the indicators to measure the human development are under constant review and the Millenium objectives[2] are very far from being achieved (*primary needs satisfaction and defense of basic human rights*), it is

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[1] http://elearninfo247.com/
[2] http://www.endpoverty2015.org/

possible to affirm that the number of developing countries where the use of information technology is high and that the awareness of the importance of investing in human capital is increasing year after year.

For each of the three words-concepts used it is interesting for us and useful to our goal to gather the data that link the increase of economics and social parameters and the ICT use. These data are constantly monitored by National and International Research Centers.

For each of the three words-concepts used it is clear the dynamic development that convince us about the real possibility to realize projects that can make use of different parties aimed to the education development. Western society are invaded by the cultural transformation caused by the explosion of internet and its applications, consequently the educational field is highly stimulated towards them. Emerging countries are also (as already explained) very much influenced by the new ICT ways of communication, which implies the fact that there are highly potential consumers – ICT and communication industry user. Within the above scenario our considerations developed into the production of some draft projects. We won't detail in this document the exact sources mentioned above nor we will define a pilot case to be used as potential standard to be replicated. Nevertheless, there are some interesting hints that can be analyzed thoroughly.

1. THE PRESENT STATUS OF ICT IN AFRICA AND THE POTENTIALITIES OF AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT

After a rough analysis of Distance learning training projects implemented for the International Development Cooperation, it is clear that some ongoing projects and some to be started are instable or not sufficient for the needs[3].

The most evident limits can be traced back to the following elements:

- Difficulty in the co-management of the projects where different international partners are involved.
- Working out of learning objects inadequate in matter of contents, of multicultural and transcultural values and ineffective communication ways[4].
- Difficulty in starting e-learning systems in pre-defined or not clarified educational paths.
- Lack of economic sustainability in the project in a middle-long term.

The above-mentioned remarks show us an interesting scenario to set an innovative and efficient project:

A. *Clear purchaser*. To identify a partner at governmental level that can support the e-learning methodology experiment in one or more educational systems. This partner would be the first sponsor of the New project.
B. *Project completeness*. To define a project that contains
    a. A concept defined among the main partner, the expert purchaser and a meaningful group of stakeholder
    b. A pilot phase
    c. A roll-out phase
    d. A performance phase
C. *Competent* and multidisciplinary group of work.
D. *Flexibility* in the technology use and maximized use of products which are the results of industrial research and commercial proposals.

2. THE CONCEPT

The ELIA Project started from CREMIT and from some experts of International Cooperation experience. It is based on three main elements:

- Vertical elements
- Horizontal elements
- Transversal feasibility elements

2.1. Vertical elements

Technologies

The choice of solutions and of instruments to use for this project is important for the impact the ICT themselves will

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[3] http://www.avu.org/e ; http://www.auf.org.
[4] References: http://www.itu.int ; http://www.close-the-gap.org/discover-us/united-nations/un-gaid/ ; http://www.unctad.org/cstd.

have in the project itself. Our choice is to use light (that can be used also with not last generation hardware and software) and open solutions (free from costs of rigid contracts of private software). The reason for our choice is both for strategic reasons and economical aspects.

In fact, on one side our choice guarantees the independency from rigid and expensive licenses and from the limits that a hardware or software not of last generation may have. It is important for us to take always into consideration that the contests we work in may have deep lacks in infrastructures and resources.

On the other side, our strategy aims to have a positive impact in the future sustainability and feasibility of the project itself. Open solutions are rapidly growing also in the e-learning field in schools, universities, public offices and companies as valid alternatives to the commercial LMS and LCMS.

Nowadays there are valid alternative open solutions to create contents to be implemented in platform. The continuous improvement of new applications in this field may lead to a complete autonomy from proprietary solutions, in parallel with the open and free content.

In particular the following solutions will be used:

- LAMO solutions (Linux Apache MySQL PHP) server side.
- Moodle as LMS platform for contents implementation and trainee activity management.
- Open source application software for content realization to be implemented in platform.

Coordination

Coordination should be entrust to a group of work that depends on MOU (Memorandum Of Understanding) among three main parts:

- *School*. It can be both Private or Public (Education Ministry, Private Schools or Colleges).
- *Research Center*. It can be CREMIT itself or a cooperation pool created ad hoc together with another Research Center o Education Department or Local University.
- *A Financial board*. It can be a private sponsor or a Temporary Business Association (TBA) among a Private or Philanthropic Sponsor, a NGO and an International Financial Board (UE, WB, UNICEF, ADF).

Counterparts

The ELIA project can be conceived on different levels. For example, the targets of the projects can be the following:

- *Institutional Education*
  ✓ Teachers' training for primary school and Teaching diploma certificate
  ✓ Teachers' training for secondary school. General and specific training to make use of ICT
  ✓ Trainers' training for Vocational Training Center. Basic level and high level training

- *Adult education and high education*
  ✓ Basic training for training worker that operate in rural areas or in difficult situations (refugee camps)
  ✓ Training in new methods of journalism (new media, social network, etc)
  ✓ Training in the field of health care and highly specialized

Of course, the ELIA project can be conceived depending on the identified target and on available resources.

Training receivers

They can be adults that have an educational and training role. They are subjects who are getting trained in an adult phase.

2.2. Horizontal elements

The ELIA project has a direct effect (education) and an indirect one (ICT development). Single people involved in the project will have different and well defined roles. Team sessions will be ensured in order each person has the chance to share information, proposals, lessons learnt and possible correction actions to be undertaken. This horizontal element has to be considered as the cultural basis of the project and the key element of the long lasting success and sustainability.

The weakest parts in most of the international cooperation projects in a long last perspective are: fragmented competences and shared out communication. In order to fight against these mistakes learnt from other projects, it is possible to think of a blog, information campaign, radio or video broadcasts very specific and focused.

The horizontal approach fosters a common learning even within the coordination team that can learn from the experience itself, improve step by step and replicate the experience also in other contexts supported and reinforced by the ICTs.

2.3. Feasibility transversal elements

The vertical practical dimension crosses with the cultural horizontal dimension reinforcing some common elements that grant the efficiency:

- **-** Accurate survey of the place where the project will be started
- **-** Setting up of an international technical staff (both sides)
- **-** Setting up of an international Didactical-Pedagogical staff (both sides)
- **-** Identification of a Project Manager in Staff to the TBA Direction (Temporary Business Association)
- **-** Strong and easy to maintain technologies acquisition (also remote)
- **-** Business plan with a solid Financial investment for all project phases

3.   PROJECT PHASES DEVELOPMENT

In the next chapter the stages of development of the project are summarized.

- - Memorandum of Understanding among parties
- - Development phase. Contents, platforms, train the trainer programs
- - Phase of University recognition
- - Plug phase
- - Pilot phase
- - Execution phase (1 year)
- - Performance phase (1 year)
- - Autonomy phase (1 year)

Fig.1 - Block diagram of the project
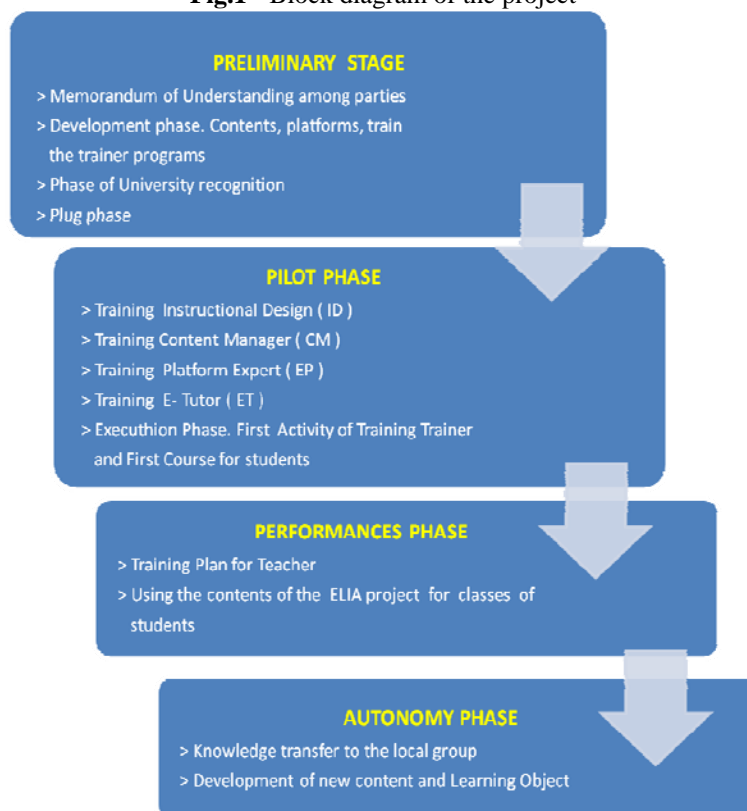
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WEB RESOURCES

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http://www.microsoft.com/it-it/about/citizenship/kenya.aspx
http://www.acp-edulink.eu/
http://africannewschallenge.org
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/themes/icts/
http://www.kenet.or.ke/
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http://appfrica.net/blog/it/archives/434/
http://www.ngoconnectafrica.org

THE INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF E-LEARNING PROGRAMS AND THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Based on the socio-anthropological approach, this article explores the intercultural implications of the development of North-South cooperation projects regarding E-Learning in the African countries. In Africa, E-Learning is widely spread in the Anglophone area and not well known in francophone counterpart. Various methods and strategies have been adopted by each group to develop E-Learning (which is not the focus of this article). The development of E-Learning points out a series of questions that we can define as "intercultural" and that touches the three main stakeholders of any cooperation project including Teachers, Students and Educational Institutions. Analyzing the first stakeholder raises the issue of the value and the management of the teaching practices of E-Learning which are fully different from the traditional pedagogy linked with the 'authority' and the 'book' leading to an erosion of the intellectual status in the society. On the other hand, students face new practices learned through E-learning from its compatibility with the professional environment capable to render them more flexible and productive compared to the face-to-face teaching. The approach of E-Learning becomes more complex in the African educational institutions that desire to pick up new intellectual resources coming from the North hemisphere but that still need to be more adapted, proactive and creative regarding the cultural and socio-economic differences. The introduction of new Information and communication technologies must therefore be seen as an opportunity to improve the African educational system and by the same time increase the socio-economic status of a continent that has been historically marginalized.

KEY WORDS: *E-Learning, University, ICT, interculturality, cooperation, development*.

The present contribution intends to emphasize and to analyze in much summarized terms development through cooperation: the promotion of E-Learning in Africa, and intends to do so using the socio-anthropology method of development backed by J.P. Olivier de Sardan, one of its main authors. This method requires the structural analysis of every social fact of cooperation. This complex analysis takes into consideration the concerns of various actors and institutions of the North and South in an interconnected and globalized world.

INTRODUCTION

The French author reminds us that "development" refers to a social phenomenon than can be defined *as "all social processes led by voluntary operations of transformation of a social milieu, enterprises through institutions or external actors to this milieu but fetching to mobilize this milieu, and relying on an attempt of grafting of resources and/or of techniques and/or of skills"* [1]. The transformation of the demographic, economic and social structures – relative in this case either to the structural aspects (industrialization, urbanization, professionalization, institutionalization...) or the qualitative ones (change of mindsets and behaviors...) - is analyzed through empirical and multidimensional studies that focus on the evolution of interactions among diverse social actors, their practices and their respective representations. Applying it especially to the study of the diffusion of E-Learning in Africa, we can affirm that it may represent one of these voluntary actions in a specific context – that at the end of the 90s - when African countries integrated the dynamics of a multi-polar globalization. This latter was characterized by an increased mobility of population, ideas and images that have their true enabler in the development and in the capillary diffusion of the new Information and Communication Technologies.

Speaking of E-Learning as a mean of cooperation also remind us that it has a concern either on the possibility of exchange of material goods or the construction of big infrastructures, but also on some immaterial goods like "knowledge" and pedagogic infrastructures for its production and diffusion. As far as E –learning is concerned as one of these pedagogic infrastructures, we use the definition given by Elliot Maise which means a modality of utilization of the technologies in network to protect, to distribute, to choose, to manage and to widen knowledge. This definition *"suggests to us four key notes: with the e-learning the way of thinking and protecting the formative contents changes; the way of organizing them and filing them changes; the modalities of benefiting and of choice on the part of the user*

change; the modality of allocation of contents and of management of the process changes" [2]. The E-Learning industry encompasses diverse operative modalities linked to different actors: it helps the capacity building of professionals in the sphere of a continuous formation, in diversifying or studying effectively the formative offer of a university. It involves the process of a specific knowledge that integrates technological and pedagogical competences.

We are developing these ideas in the light of a category called "interculturality" because - as the word etymologically indicates - every action of development is also a story of meeting/colliding among cultures that coexist and interact. By its nature, the concept of interculturality goes beyond a dynamic and proactive way: those of multiculturalism and pluralism. Still, we are not getting into the debate that the use of this notion deserves; the use of the concept of interculturality helps to put in light or how being cancelled from the Information and Communication Technologies may not constitute the cultural differences (that is the differences among the groups and persons that do not share the same universe of meanings and the same expressive forms of these meanings but only those gaps that in an unglobalized world constitute the inaccessible frontiers if lacking points of entry. Today these gaps are no longer a wall, but they become a bridge that renders possible their own overcoming towards a new culture that has the inevitable form of the "metissage" (bowling pot).

THE TWO VERSIONS OF E-LEARNING IN AFRICA

We do not possess a complete phenomenology of the experience of E-Learning in Africa; nevertheless we are in a position to identify two geographical and cultural trajectories, identifiable through the two major linguistic areas: the Anglophone zone (with real and more influence on international level) and the Francophone one (often not well known). In short, the way we went through was not dissimilar from the one of the E -learning in our country as we shall see at the end; we find ourselves today in a situation of rethinking the modalities and reviewing the priority objectives[1]. C. Depover and F. Orivel (2012) carried out a comparative analysis of E-Learning between the two parts (Anglophone and Francophone), emphasizing the diversity of strategic and methodological options that differentiate them [4]. We limit ourselves to a few hints.

-   As far as the Francophone world is concerned, an interesting point of view is constructed by the action of the Francophone University Agency (AUF: Agence Universitaire Francophone) [5], taken from the beginning by its activity to promote the diffusion of E-Learning and to make it the "case of resonance" of good practices. The French distant formation (FOAD : Formation Ouverte à Distance) is defined by Depover and Orivel as "handmade" in opposition to the projects of Anglo-Saxon mega universities to which the term "industrial" well suits. According to the authors in the francophone world, the main purpose of FOAD concerns Masters Programs in which the follow up of the students is more individualized. From the beginning, the choice has been to link the FOAD to the didactic activities of the university and to anchor them to the internal of their organized structures and of the respective academic curriculum. We are not in front of a project of vast proportions from a work of deep study, rather of a proposal born from diverse experimental episodes[2].
-   In the Anglo-Saxon world the tendency is more of the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and of the virtual universities intended for a large audience of youth. They propose the idea to create some new channels, alternatives and self-regulating formation. From the francophone point of view, the judgment on this system is ambivalent. According to J. Wallet, the MOOC *"are the windows of a large warehouse, with big and*

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[1] P.C. Rivoltella reassumes it in three stages or "generations": The first is constituted by the experience of Distant Formation (FAD) developed in the Italy of the period after the Second World War with the scope to provide the country with new technical competencies. In this period we find two experience of success: la Scuola Radio Eletra di Torino (from 1951) that promotes t he courses by correspondence and the Telescuola of the RAI to which the program follows is Never too late aimed at supplying a television formation to adults who cannot read nor write. The second generation searches to go past the non personalized set up and strongly transmissive of the first. E-Learning came up between the years 1990 and 2000. It developed in two directions: first of all in the formation of the teaching and administrative staff of the public administration. In this context emerges the value of the figure of the Tutor, like a figure of reference and factors of personalization. Successfully the E-Learning was also developed by the universities that had the willing to extend the formation offer and to provide themselves with a new instrument. Academic structures come up and ad hoc delegate to the methodological, technological and didactic research depending both on new degree courses and on improving the didactic competency of the teachers less accustomed to the use of the new technologies. The true and proper telemetric universities also came up, regulated in 2003 and these today are over 120. In this period, some professional categories, like that of doctors, have adopted the instruments of distant formation like the instruments of on-going updating. The third generation is that called 2.0. It's a product of normalization of E-learning, in the sense of its assimilation on the part of a cultural context that has constituted a recognized instrument used at all levels and in many contexts. The future seems characterized by a second thought blended in the sense of TELE (Technology Enhanced Learning Environment), learning environments not necessarily supported, equipped and strengthened telemetrically by the technology in which the technologies developed from a distance become grouped technologies, instruments that favour the social dimension of learning [3].
[2] The AUF has been active from the end of 90s with the objective to support the network of the francophone universities in the world. As association it plays the role to promote union and network among universities on geographic base, themes and others, but never in concurrence with them. It collaborates with other European institutes dedicated to the distant formation (the CIFFAD of Quebec, the ACCT of Bordeaux that became the OIF in 1995). Among first projects there were those to install in the academic headquarters of countries of the South, the technological structures capable to facilitate the research works of the teachers and or the researches and students at the end of a cycle of studies. At the beginning all the strategy is based on the organisation of SYFED (Système Francophone d'Edition et de Diffusion), to put at the disposition of university world an actualized scientific documentation. From Sénégal the center extends to all the francophone countries in Africa.

prestigious signs for advertisement. Like in big commercial malls of Paris, these windows are immense, wonderful and many people come to admire them, especially during the Christmas period. But this does not mean that later they would buy it" [6]. We are in front of the commercial version of the instruction, not anymore among the objectives of a monopoly of the state, but rather inside the logic of marketing. D. Oillo, as Stanford mention that, Haward and other international universities can afford to don't have an interest of the zones in which the digital infrastructures are still weak, but confident on a mass of students that other universities do not have, they compensate a large number of leavers with significant success.

- A further difference of perspective can be found on the point of view of actors in favor of the E-Learning. While in the Francophone world, there are likely control by public institutions; in the Anglophone world we have the dominance of the private sector. And the public institutions, as J. Wallet mentions in the document already cited of AUF, have some modes of funding, functioning, and reasoning, and a know-how which are common to those of the face-to-face teaching and which will integrate with difficulty the distant teaching. The wish of the AUF engaging itself in distant learning in relation with cooperation North-South is to respond to the needs of formation but also to structure the offer, to avoid the creation of a bazaar of education in which the fake universities in Africa flourish and at the same time where pressure of globalization expose public institutes to competition with international offer without having the same facilities[3].

NUMEROUS ACTORS IN THE FIELD

We have chosen three different actors to analyze some problems linked to putting in place programs of E-Learning in African context:

- the institutional actors, the African universities in partnership with institutions of the North with more experience of E-Learning;
- The teachers called to run this innovation;
- The students always more attracted by more effective "market of formation".

The point of view of the institutional actors

To understand the value and the perception of E-Learning in Africa, it may be useful to put forward big lines of the evolution of the universities in Africa. From the colonial period and the following days of independence (60-80) and those of structural adjustment (90-2010), the relation between policy of exploitation / economic growth and the development of educational infrastructures (the creation of a scholar system and a university network) has always been direct and problematic. Today Africa has many scholar systems reflecting the colonial powers who occupied the countries: these have given form to a scholastic system composed of various levels (basic literacy, technical formation, university) to which management, at least at the beginning, has been always entrusted to the religious force that the colonial administrators were co-opting in their countries of origin[4]. Still the university formation has known only in the postcolonial period a real expansion. It appeared like the leading instrument for the training of the leaders of the new states. A decisive turning point was however in 90s, when following the plans to tie up national budget, universities found themselves downsized. The consequences of some plan to recover from national debt on the university systems have been diversified. The reduction of state finances for school has leaded to a quantitative and qualitative reduction of the structures of support to the research and teaching (university libraries and laboratories) and a decrease of teacher's salaries reflecting loss of motivation and social status.

Moreover the academic staff is obliged to search for part time jobs of including consultancy for the international NGOs or even migrating to educational institutions of the North. To go about those systemic failures, networks have been developed. The first are the networks of NGOs specialized in applied researches like the "Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa" (CODESIRA) of Dakar or the "International Institute for Insect physiology and Ecology" (ICIPE) in Nairobi. These organizations have been able to mitigate the crisis of the university sector putting forward necessary resources to the applied research for the sector of the Graduates and post graduates training. The second phenomenon, more importantly, is the rapid growth private colleges (in some countries, around the year 2000, they arrive at collecting more students than public institutions) distinguishable by their status (non lucrative and lucrative) by their identity (secular or religious), by their thematic options (Business school) and by the quality of

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[3] Even here one moves from the proposition of distant teaching concerned with the teaching staff to the creation of a virtual university (the UNISAT) in 1992-23. In 1995 it was decided to create a model of E-Learning more participative and that permits to unite distant moments to face to face moments with the presences of the tutor. The proposal of a Virtual Francophone University that is placed side by side to the similar project of the World Bank of a Université Virtuelle Africaine (UVA) was launched, but without success. In 2000 the project (UFV) was abandoned and it was decided to move to the organization of Campus Numerique Francophone (CNF). A little later the centers SYFED became CNF and the first was activated in Yaounde in Cameroon. In twelve years 43 CNF in the world were prepared to which 23 were added in partnership. In 2012, 40 among courses of licentiate and masters were proposed in Burkina F., Cameroon, Egypt, Lebanon, Madagascar, Morocco, Sénégal, Tunisia and Vietnam.

[4] One chapter in part is represented by Islamic universities. A general figure even if very limited of the story of the African university is constructed on the text of P. Zeleza [8].

their structures.

In these final years the institutional actor (the African universities) seems confined to two difficult modular factors: the demand to adapt to a globalization strongly normative and the weakness of local governance. For the first factor it is necessary to mention that if the university in the postcolonial phase was having as objective to train the leaders and necessary workers to implement African national politics in a context of growing globalization. This factor has been also impacted by the new objective to prepare elite to the demands of the global market and the necessary requirements to update technologically and culturally the private training. The second factor requires that the adaptation of the demand must be realized in a milieu of immense weakness of the systems or of the local institutions among which are the universities. In Africa these are symbolized today by some structural errors that various actors have summarized like the absence of a qualified training, the absence of diversification, the problem of frequent strikes, the increase of university population, the difficult to access the scientific and technical information. The consideration of this double factor (global pressure and local weakness) – must not be under evaluated in the analysis of concrete experiences of E-Learning that by their nature are based on collaboration among institutions of the North and the South. – That to only have a "fair weight".

In this picture, the choice to propose different forms of E-Learning is dictated often by an opportunistic strategy tending to retrieve the maximum educational productivity but unfortunately difficult to find. This is still a factor that can hamper the positive outcome of the experience. To this proposal the testimony of the EBAD (Ecole des bibliothécaires, archivistes et documentalistes) of Dakar which has decided to switch to the E-Learning is interesting[5]. This international school that in the 90s was having half of its students who were coming from other African countries found itself running for 10 years to see this percent reduced to zero, after the drastic reduction of the state scholarships and of the unemployment in public office. From there, the necessity to think again about the school adopting the principle: "if the students do not come to us, we shall go to them". An observer of the EBAD project comments like this: "*We are underlining that the swerving of the project to the e-learning is carried out in full dot.com period when one believed that the Internet could have changed educational system and the fact to earn a lot of money. In the middle way between the opportunism and the strategic reflection, in a period during which the development of E-learning was still a dream*" [9]. In this case the opportunism is transformed into an innovative capacity throughout the long-sighted leadership of its director that from the immediate benefits it will succeed to catch a glimpse and realize a new model of teaching giving back a hope to a training that seemed a little waned.

The point of view of the teachers

In the proposals of E-Learning through the investment and the implication of institutions, the most crucial is still adequate teachers. From them – the main stakeholder of teaching – the opportunities linked to the use of the new technologies are often perceived as a problem. Problems that seem to prevent an implication of teacher's board are multifaceted. Before anything the difficulty to acquire the necessary competencies on the new technologies is a problem that is gradually simplified with the lowering of the costs of the new technologies. Second difficulty is to enter in a new didactic logic. The professors often live on the facility of the students to adopt the scientific computer instruments and to enter in the logic of digital information like a threatening to their authority. The facility to access to the digital scientific information seems to most teachers like a mortal body exhausted by the students' learning. What frightens is also the loss of authority linked to the end of the face-to-face way to do teaching in which the lesson of the teacher remains the principal form of scientific information at the disposition of the student. This difficulty sends us back to the character that still pyramidal and little participative in the university training in Africa. Lastly the difficulty linked to the effort to integrate new operative modalities that necessitate a gross personal investment in acquisition of instruments, in time to dedicate, in intellectual resource to use, the absence of recognition of the scientific comity and of a consequent economic compensation that makes it possible is to be mentioned.

In short from the point of view of the teachers two elements result essentially for an adequate realization of the projects of E-Learning: the economic realization and the restoration of the status of the tutor. To a proposal of retribution the comment of a director of school on this subject is effective: "*when they pay the teachers, this works*". And speaking of the investment in the E-Learning reminds that in every case exists a second motivation. Less material but more scientific order: "*to earn ourselves is also the quality and the structure of their courses. Still this second motivation though important in a teacher's career, it does not surpass the first" [10*]. The second factor of success is the social status of the tutor. This figure is linked from the beginning to the role that extends from the "technological facilitator" to the pedagogic mediator", it is by many indicated as a "bridge" between teachers and students, capable to help renewal of the method of teaching [11]. In the case in fact of distant teaching the figure of the Tutor constitutes a professional status distinct from that of the teacher and his competencies regarding whether the pedagogic mediation or those relative to the organization, to the social and motivational aspects up to those technique and administrative.

Still, it is not forgotten that the bigger problem regarding the world of teachers and the E-learning is that of helping them to seize the pedagogic potentialities of the new technologies related to the two classic elements of the figure of the teacher: the choice of the methods of the research and the proposal of contents. In the experience of E-learning, the

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[5] The story about this center can be found at: www.ebad.ucad.sn/Archives/forciir.

interaction between the teachers and the students – basic in every formative relation – instead of being substituted or replaced by a student-computer relation it is pushed to intensify itself and the role of the professor in the learning of a method is evident. The same is valid for the same modalities of construction and digital diffusion of the contents of teaching: far from becoming secondary, the E -Learning asks for new modalities of organization and of presentation where positive relapses become an advantage of the entire sector.

The point of view of the students

Lastly we come to the students in their capacity of usability and clients of the proposals of E -Learning. On recent investigation on the profile of the candidates that enter the experience of distant teaching, women are only the 20% of the total of the young one in professional activity, and living in urban areas. This profile reveals already how many are highlighted above: the local elite that in the postcolonial season were seeing in public office a possibility of social ascension, they now apply to international institutions and organizations and to multinational and local businesses. We find them among these candidates of young students (in search of academic titles more marketable in a global context) and many state civil servants who, forced by the precariousness of their status, want to invest a new supplement training capable to upgrade them professionally.

For some observers the world of the young in the countries of the South shows a growth of individualism in the way to devise the training and the instruction: this is not seen as a possibility to construct competencies to be active in one's country, but like an individual investment on one's future. As far as this could be only partly true, it must not be forgotten that for many young ones the digital modernity appears to them like a virtual and real possibility to over cross boarders and to break the rigidity in which their societies seem degraded.

The point of view of the young in front of the potentiality linked to the proposal of the E -Learning have been well explained in an article of the magazine Liberation of 18/02/2006 dedicated to the Numeric Campus of Libreville in Gabon. The article presents the motivations for which the young are attracted to the forms of E-learning. It seems to offer them the access to a quality teaching in a time in which the direct access to the European training seems impossible due to financial and document motives. Besides the participative modalities that the access to distant formation seems to respond to a question of participation "tout court" (all short). One of them says: "*in Africa the word is not easily given to the young. But in the Numeric Campus (and in the programs of distant education) we take it without difficulty*".

CONCLUSION

We have been interrogating ourselves on the promotion of the E-learning in Africa with an evident practical intent: that of learning from the analysis of the past the better practices and a vision more realistic of the difficulties and of the opportunities that it could bring. We summarize what has been said in a synthetic way.

- In view of the diversity of technical and methodological aspects that are suggested in different programs of E-learning in African Universities, it is necessary, above all, to acknowledge the existence of a double interpretation in connection to its usefulness : the E-learning as a different didactical way applied to university programs (the francophone vision) and the E-learning as being a new methodological approach compared to the traditional one known in the universities. The two visions respond to divergent political objectives bound to the role of the university in a globalized world and to its status (public or private).
- Still the choice to promote the modalities of distant teaching totally or partially are today strategic for a university that must elaborate the proper training offer in a context that has become always more competitive and marketable. Besides, these modalities – as far as they could be developed and renovated and as far as they could be experimented by a very small number of students – they still know to transmit the image of modernity capable to attract more youth.
- The E-Learning understood as realization in a local context of a specific pedagogic structure has in itself an ability of innovation that is still long from exhausting its potentialities in the African context [12]. The fact that it seems to have exhausted its magical fascination more than discouraging us must lead us to great realism. Such minor fascination however can be accused by the fact that in Africa, partly rare exceptions and despite the rapid improvements, it brought technical problems and intensive use of the opportunities of the network (frequent and extended suspensions of the distribution of the electric power, dislocation of internet shops only in more important urban areas, costs still too high than the supporting material).
- We have affirmed that, although pilot projects exist that we should define as "experience of success" in the environment of the E-Learning, they turn to become reproducers on a vast scale. Among the reasons we have highlighted like the point of view of the African academic authority, the E-Learning may not be actually a priority. Faced to a boundless growth of students and the toll of integrating them adequately, from the pedagogic point of view, the African universities fall into the risk of under evaluating such an opportunity.
- The E-Learning is an educational infrastructure that demands, in order to be realised, an articulated series of competences to new educational and social techniques. Above all it acts to promote the adoption and the

mastery of ICT. On this point of view the generations after the years 2000 seem to have an advantage to those who completed their academic formation before this period.

- Several observers and researchers have put to light the exceptional impact of ICT on the methodology of teaching. The new technologies of communication, far from rendering the role of a teacher unnecessary, demand a radical change in favour of greater communication creativity, a clear methodological rigidity and a stronger interaction with students. The role of tutoring is therefore strategic especially in launching projects and in accompanying the persons involved (professors and students) so as to render this stride functional.
- The capacity to create networks among universities, economic, social and religious subjects remain today a choice of strategic intelligence that asks to be reevaluated. In this sense the investment is essential in professional figures of "creators of networks", capable to transform the affinities and the cultural compatibilities into structured and shared resources for long term perspectives.
- The point of view of the teachers is fundamental because it is commonly accepted that the pedagogic innovation passes and remains with them. It is also known that a temporally and physiological space exists between experimentation of new technologies and organized integration in a system of instruction. What is important is to maintain permeability between research and pedagogic innovation then, E-learning as instrument can contribute to this.

The social anthropologist J. Tonda in his book "Le souverain moderne" speaks of the invasive and violent modernity and of its symbols, capable to impose its domination unconditionally, from there and over every consent, and to mold images, meanings and gestures. According to Tonda the Sovereign owes its effectiveness to the aggressive consent and to the paradoxical connivance of the bodies and of their capacity of imagination. Speaking of aggressive consent (in French «consentements révoltés») Tonda refers to the living and painful feeling – that accompanies the consent of the persons to the modernity and its logic – of the inequities and the injustices that structure the African social and economic space [13]. The modernity in fact is characterized for this capacity to produce classes less utopist ("internet for all!") that conceals deep and structural disparities.

The dramatic perception of Tonda is perhaps well that it may accompany also us, today, while we interrogate ourselves on the capacity of the ICT to favor a less imbalanced development of Africa. The risk is in fact still strong once more to go beyond it rhetorically in an ingenuous optimism. The optimism is useful to the cooperation with Africa and they try also the fact that official documents might look for toning down excessively enthusiastic on this theme[6] . That which rescues – gives vigor to every enterprise – is always the lucidity of the analysis and the humility in action: they can do from foundation more solid to better hopes to which we wish to continue to entrust our confidence in life.

The challenge to deal with is in fact properly that of succeeding to do in a way the introduction of the new Information and Communication Technologies remains a historical opportunity – not to reduce the simple technological alphabetization – for redesigning the profile of the African society and of which also social or group actors historically more marginal will be able to take an advantage in the course of time.

NOMENCLATURE

AUF	Agence Universitaire Francophone
CNF	Campus Numérique Francophone
EBAD	Ecole des bibliothécaires, archivistes et documentalistes
FAD	Formazione a distanza
FOAD	Formation Ouverte à Distance
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SYFED	Système Francophone d'Edition et de Diffusion
TELE	Technology Enhanced Learning Environment
UFV	Université Francophone Virtuelle
UVA	Université Virtuelle Africaine

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PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES AND TOOLS
FOR IMPROVING TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM: THE IUS CASE[1]

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the experience carried out by a confederation of Higher Education Institution (IUS) active in six Latin American countries.. To achieve the goal of a new teaching and learning model based on the "learning process" and shift the paradigm of learning to "centred teaching", the Higher Education Institutions have defined a new profile for university teachers. This action expresses three features presented in this paper: the first refers to the profile as the "product" of a Community of Thought; the second refers to a "participated process", a working model that allowed the co-construction of the profile with the teachers, the administrative and the human resources staff of the universities; the third presents the tools and technologies used in an integrated way (Virtual Collaborative Learning Environment based on Web 2.0, Human Resource Management, video-research, e-portfolio).
The project - developed through action-research - has defined a shared idea of teaching quality, which is research-based and supported by tools enabling self-assessment of every single teacher, university quality monitoring , and the implementation of continuous improvement plans to build a community of learning.

KEYWORDS: *Higher Education Teacher profile, Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Competencies evaluation, Tuning America-Latina, Web2.0, E-Portfolio.*

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

International research emphasizes that quality teaching is necessarily student-centred and that its aim is to provide effective learning opportunities for all students [Henard, Ringuet, 2008]. In addition, the changes in competencies requirements occurred with the establishment of the learning society deeply influence students' lifestyles [Benavides et al., 2010]. In order to achieve their full potential as adults, youths need to develop a range of competencies and knowledge able to help them master and implement concepts learnt outside school or academic contexts [NAP, 2012]. Development potential and potentially successful students - in both higher education and vocational careers - must be backed by mastery of at least four key areas: critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration and creativity and innovation [Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2010, p.2]. In higher education, each student must be seen as an individual able to learn continuously by applying critical thinking, performing team work, solving problems and making effective decisions [Tuning Project, 2008].

The demand for new competencies for young people consequently implies updated teacher profiles ready to deal with the new student profiles [Guasch, Alvarez, Espasa, 2010]. Teachers should hold classes and manage classrooms by implementing more effective and innovative teaching methods [Schleicher, 2012; Benavides et al, 2010], thus rapidly conveying the outcome of research on the learning process. Such higher education trends have increased quality awareness of the learning opportunities for students [Henard and Ringuet, 2008, p.10]. Furthermore, as observed by Zabalza [2003], it is necessary that professors alter their point of view, enabling the transition from teacher-centred teaching to a style aiming at quality learning. In effect, research proves how university teaching methods influence students' involvement both in the classroom and when studying, [Altbach et al., 2009, p.11] and shows how deeply they are correlated with the teacher's idea of teaching and of learning [Kember and Kwan, 2000]. Higher education teachers generally privilege a mainly content-centred educational approach, yet the learning-centred approach serves the purposes of effective teaching methods much better. The Talis-Ocse [2009] survey seems to back Kember and Kwan's research, as it has shown how teachers' beliefs influence teaching styles and methods [Zhang, 2009]. It is deemed important that teachers move "off stage" and adopt teaching methods that allow students to play the lead role in their learning process [Tuning Project, 2008]. Doing so, students could be educated in a teaching context leading them to active, democratic and responsible citizenship. As stressed by Europa2020 [EU, 2010], the higher education experience should provide all young people with the tools needed for positive interaction with peers from different contexts,

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promoting intercultural competencies, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights and the environment, while fighting any form of discrimination.

2. TEACHER QUALITY

Latin American universities have taken the opportunity to address, in an innovative way, the challenges posed by areas of expansion and of internationalization in the knowledge society [UNESCO, 2009]. Higher education in Latin America is engaged in the process of improving compatibility, comparability and quality of the service it provides [Tuning Project, 2008], supported by a range of actions involving teachers and aimed at the enhancement of teaching and learning quality. As a matter of fact, higher teaching quality implies the opportunity to increase teachers competencies also self-evaluation wise, to enhance students' motivation and diligence [Butler, 2007], to organise and manage participatory and inclusion contexts able to develop lifelong competencies and creative thinking.

Teaching quality and the quality level of higher education organisations are bound to the awareness of personal and social responsibility and to the development of the participatory process in order to identify and represent the dimensions involved in institutional "quality vision". As pointed out by Rabinowitz [2013], it is important to bear in mind the term "participatory" - which does not only entail asking for advice but rather implies every single participant becomes an essential element in the planning process. You can describe a participatory approach as a method that takes everybody's point of view into account and allows everybody to participate in the planning process with some degree of decision-making power [Rabinowitz, 2013].

Specialised literature constantly describes how teachers learn to work with their colleagues within the Professional Learning Community, engaging in ongoing exchange and by reviewing their practices, analysing students' performances and developing and creating more effective education techniques [Darling-Hammond, 2009].

The positive effects of the professional communities - regardless of school type - are now widely documented by a remarkable number of studies. The relevant feature is that teacher communities are often part of networks in which members can discuss the practice focus or shared educational concerns [Darling-Hammond, 2009; Fullan, 1991].

Even though each professional learning community is unique, the main features lie in collaboration and peer-influenced decision-making, as well as in democratic behaviour and in the way each member participates in vision-building: beliefs, values and shared vision. Other features include: supporting and distributed leadership; adult cooperative learning; positive attitude: trust, peer support, shared practices; sustainable development; continuous self-evaluation process [Hord and Sommers, 2008; Zepeda, 2008; Fullan, 2005]. PLCs therefore evolve into special contexts - physical, social, emotional and cognitive space - where relationships and learning perform a "transformative" action influencing individual and social perspectives and habits of mind [Mezirow, 2003; Costa, 2008].

3. DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

In today's world building and developing professional teacher communities, organizing and proposing continuing education, and enhancing Institution quality, implies coping with the extraordinary evolution process involving information and communication technology and, more in detail, web 2.0.

McManus [2005] asserts that web expansion and easy access to the same have radically modified its very nature. Interactive and dynamic elements have emerged in the use of web 2.0 [O'Reilly, 2006]. Participatory, collaborative and distributed practices are now simpler and enhanced, providing informal and non-formal learning opportunities in everyday life [Lankshear, Knobel, 2006].

Web 2.0 relational nature is boosted by the interactive comments and considerations posted by the participants. The overall concept seems to identify "knowledge" as a "collective agreement" and the groups as "speaker communities" - a concept able to combine facts with other dimensions of the human experience, like opinions, values and beliefs [Dede, 2008, p. 80].

Taken as a whole, web 2.0 interconnection, creative competence and interactive features support the so-called "participatory culture": clear from barriers, both in building stage and in knowledge update, and supported by civic engagement, it constitutes a great incentive and is highly supportive for creating and sharing personal digital productions and finding out what other people thing about them [Jenkins, 2006]. Thus higher education has to face interesting challenges and evolve towards a more than radical and fresh change in order to progress and educate new generations in a profoundly transformed world. Its role can contribute to educating students so that society, currently undergoing a significant crisis of values, may be able to overcome mere financial and functional considerations, achieving new, sustainable integration.

4. RESEARCH CONTEXT

This is the approach we have chosen for introducing the project selected for outlining the teachers', administrative staff's and executive staff's profiles at IUS confederate Universities: considered as a whole, they are concurrently

human resources able to enhance academic life quality and, specifically, to create the conditions for student-centred learning.

The assumption is that teachers perform best by organising learning and student-centred activities. For this to happen, the same teachers must be given the opportunity to work according to the paradigms required by the competence-oriented and student-centred perspective. As a consequence, it is essential that the human resources in charge of university administration are in the position to create a profile able to integrate into the student-centred paradigm perspective. Nevertheless, human resources managers must update their profiles to be able to assess and organize adequate teacher and administrative staff improvement paths in order to maintain, or enhance, the level of quality of learning-centred education.

The building of the participatory profile was the last stage of a long-term improvement process involving higher education institutions.

The goal of the first stage of such process was to provide the universities involved in the project with the so-called *Marco de Referencia* [*Framework of reference*], a set of documents outlining the elements to characterize the Institution Identity and stating the essential conditions - defined Policies - for implementing such identity model.

The second stage was dedicated to the implementation of the *Marco de Referencia*, through the so-called "Mutual programs", whose goal was to secure common development bases. They consisted in action programs (average duration three years) for setting goals, methodologies and tools according to a process logic.

The first of these programs involved the drafting of the Carta di Navigazione [*Navigation Chart*] which provided a clear institutional project for each institution, the adoption of multi-year strategic plans and of annual operational plans, the implementation of a system and practice of auto-evaluation and hetero-evaluation, the pursuit of state accreditation in countries whose laws provided such status.

The second program was dedicated to the *Integrated Human Resources management* process introduced at the Conference held in Porto Alegre (Brazil) in June 2009, virtually an extension of the strategic plan outlined in the *Navigation Chart*. To keep up with the deep ongoing global change involving the education paradigm, it was essential - in order to enhance quality - to draft university teacher Competence Profiles as if they were the main "value generator" in an institution. In addition, other two correlated competence profiles had to be defined, namely those for the Executive and Administrative Staff.

Once profiles had been outlined, a Training course on human resources management named "Integrated Management for competencies" would have started. Course content sequence - grouped into eight main themes, developed April to November 2011 within a virtual environment built for cooperative learning - coincide with the human resources Value Cycle, which accompanies individuals throughout their professional career.

Human resources enhancement *generates value* for the institution and for the end users (the students), as well as for all the external stakeholders (value chain). The value generated by this chain has repercussions on the same human resources, involving them in the generated benefits, through professional development schemes, opportunities for competence consolidation and development, and further personal and team investment. The outcome is a virtuous circle widely involving the whole value cycle.

Table 1 - Value cycle.

	Step	Description	Framework questions
1	Purpose of the organization	Training students to "learn to learn", helping each student to outline personal, future-oriented, life projects.	What essential aim do the Institution's actions focus on?
2	Pragmatic view	Promoting competent relationship networks for creating a permanent learning system able to involve students and all individuals through their interests, schedule and location, based on a person-focused approach.	Which participants and processes are involved to achieve the essential purpose of the organization?
3	Value chain	The teachers act as value generators, outlining the competencies - identitary, systemic, professional – able to generate value, in order to be able to promote/accept/support each student.	Which competencies, peculiar to human resources, can generate value?
4	Value chain	The institutions, as an organisation, define the competencies that help teachers act as value generators.	Which competencies, peculiar to the institution/s can generate value?
5	Professional Learning Community	The institution is structured as a professional learning community for promoting continuous goal and competence improvement and evaluation through processes involving the core [self-peer evaluation] and the exterior [hetero-evaluation and	Which processes and products contribute to Institution continuous improvement?

		accountability].	
6	Competence profiles as the outcome of the work carried out by the learning community	Human resources profiles quality - representing the professional learning community - is continuously assessed and reported within the professional community in order to update and improve the level of quality of the profile competencies and of the institution.	Where are we heading? Is our work consistent with the purpose?
7	Continuous assessment and orientation of individual and group -focused education aimed at improvement	The human resources generating value within the institution constantly verify the purposes and new emerging visions redefine the value chain and enhance the level of quality of the learning-centred organization.	Is the purpose up-to-date?

Source: Antonello Vedovato, Fondazione Edulife, 2009.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, TOOLS AND VALUE CYCLE

The implemented research-action project was lead by two key elements: a) the "value cycle", which represents a methodology - integrated by processes and products - able to support the organizations in outlining competence profiles for continuous improvement; b) the web.2.0-based cooperative digital learning environment (AVAC) in which the value cycle developed. The teachers', administrative staff's and human resources' managerial profiles were finalised over the three years. The research-action was based on the legitimate peripheral [Engström, 1996] social-constructivist theoretical model [Vygotskji, 1967] of adult learning, as per Kolb's cycle [1984], adopted by learning communities [Hord, 1997; Wenger, 1998].

Videos were used in some of the project stages to provide content and methodology support. Further videos were produced by the universities involved in the project to review the processes implemented in profile-definition stage.

Participants are represented as follows (table2):

Table 2 - Parties involved in action-research

Participants	Stage	No.	University No.
Teachers	Participatory profile co-building	386	13
Teachers	Profile experimentation	371	14
Referee tutors	Experimentation support and focus group lead	66	14
Administrative staff	Participatory profile co-building	64	7
Administrative staff	Profile experimentation	184	7
Executive staff	Profile experimentation	126	7
Tutors	Experimentation support and focus group lead	30	7

Source: self-sourced.

Profile definition was broken down into four stages.

In the first stage, carried out face-to-face, a set of possible competencies, classified by area, were presented to the university deans, to the human resources management teams and to the teachers' representatives. The initial submission was based on some university teacher competence models, previously proposed by a few authors [Zabalza, 2003; Euridyce, 2007; Bozu y Canto Carrera, 2009]. The competence areas provided a basic structure which, through face-to-face introductory cooperative work, represented a starting-point for discussion and an opportunity for perspective sharing.

In the second stage the work teams adjusted within the purposely set web2.0 digital environment. In this stage, the inter-university teams used previously defined competence models and a further model based on dynamic and authentic assessment [Wiggins, McTighe, 1998] for defining the profile content (competence areas), the dimensions involved in the competent action, the explicitation criteria of what should be tackled while carrying out the competent action and the competence development indicators - broken up into four levels and providing feedback if the criterion is met. The process was carried out adopting web 2.0 technology, which simplifies and enhances participatory, collaborative and distributive practices (wiki) and proposes informal and non-formal learning opportunities during the activities. Opportunities for increasing interaction and social relations created by the narrative tools (forums and blogs) are boosted. Blogs take on the nature of narrative practices applied to experience, quality evaluation, space for learning different writing styles; wikis allow for the co-building of constantly updated content, significant to research, study and insight.

In the third stage each team thus integrated the process by making changes, if necessary. Wiki tool features (statistical data, accept and refuse changes, text integration) allowed for the achievement of the profile end product through co-built procedures [Vigotskij, 1967]. The profile content was validated and legitimated by the learning community through the co-building process [Engström, 1996]. It thus becomes a "value generator" for the whole learning community.

In the fourth stage, the profile was uploaded onto the Human Resource Management (HRM) tool and underwent the experimentation stage with teachers not involved in the shared building process.

The HRM tool is integrated into the cooperative digital environment (AVAC) developed on databases containing the final human resources profiles, visualized as text descriptors in the chosen competence dimensions, in the quality indicators and in the level ranges. The HRM makes different assessment levels possible: each single teacher can self-evaluate his/her own competence levels; each colleague can be deemed a "peer" able to provide feedback; each department manger can have access to the evaluations and obtain an analytical and global framework of the department competencies; external assessors (hetero-evaluation) can evaluate the competence levels of the single teachers and departments. HRM is based on the authentic assessment theoretical model, which considers assessment rubrics, quality indicators and quality or competence evidence evaluation tools.

Summarizing, the teachers' profile as end product of the professional community including the thirteen institutions – achieved through cooperative work carried out by the teachers and inspired by continuous assessment – was developed through:

- competence definition. The teachers selected the competence listed in the final profile through forum interaction, supported by theoretical contributions and research;
- creation of competence quality indicators and levels. Competencies were later transformed into wiki articles. Competencies were described in terms of descriptors, indicators and evidence. Wikis – cooperative writing and composition wise - were fed by the teachers who corrected, rewrote and co-built the final profile;
- metacognition. The teachers who participated in the experimentation used the blog for narrating their own experience, applying metacognitive synthesis to the implemented processes. The teachers involved in the research process increased their awareness level, transforming practice into "reflection" able to inspire the next step.

Throughout cooperative work the teachers integrated the experience as a recursive change process, carrying out effective actions for building up positive interdependence and trust among the community members:

- enhancing learning through action;
- taking on a leadership distribution model;
- allowing the individuals involved in the process to take responsibility for their own development.

The evaluation concept – whose aim is to appreciate what is important and meaningful – has become a trend for continuous improvement as it is correlated to the use of tools and processes that must be able to constantly appreciate what counts. The continuing learning paradigm, throughout life and its locations, outlines a new requirement, which is also connected to the essence of evaluation: it becomes – as a process – a learning opportunity [Wiggins, 1998; OECD, 2010] and provides a clue on what should be improved and in which way (table 3).

Table 3 - Interrelation involving teachers' and executive and administrative staff's profiles

IDENTITARY	SYSTEMIC	PROFESSIONAL
TEACHER PROFILE		
Knowing how to promote human and professional development	Being connected	Designing and developing contents
	Working in an organization as in a learning community	Designing and managing the learning environment
	Carrying out research	Assessing learning and competencies
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PROFILE		
Promoting institutional development	Being connected	Managing processes and resources
Having an active role in the community	Working in an organization as in a learning community	Promoting the development of human resources
		Developing a systemic mindset
EXECUTIVE STAFF PROFILE		
Promoting institutional development	Being connected	Managing processes and resources
Having an active role in the community	Working in an organization as in a learning community	Promoting the development of human resources

		Developing a systemic mindset

Source: self-sourced.

Each profile is broken up into competence areas, which are divided into competence fields including different groups. Each group is made up of several criteria, each of them is matched with a scale of indicators (four levels ranging from 1 to 4), of descriptive nature (evidence), indicating the level of competence mastery.
Mastery numerical rating outlines:

- the level of mastery of each single teacher/administration staff member/executive staff member compared to the expected rating of the single IUS;
- the level of sectoral mastery of teachers/administrative staff/executive staff;
- the overall level of the single IUSs compared to the expected rating.

The evidence constitutes a basis for comparison against the indicators and allows teachers to outline the development level of their own profile. Evidence is collected and selected by the teachers through the e-portfolio and represents a guide for both self and hetero-evaluation of the profile development level.
Profile dimensions created inextricable interdependence among the same, as all of the three profiles focus on the same competence areas, which are deemed strategic for a learning paradigm-oriented change and are aimed at achieving the learning to learn-centred education goal specifically pursued by Higher education institutions. In detail, we present the competence areas and the correlated evidence in teacher profile (table 4).

Table 4 - Final teacher profile and evidence per achieved quality levels.

HE Teacher Profile		
Areas	**Competencies**	**Quality Level [EQL] [E-Portfolio] evidence**
Professional	Designing and developing topics	Course program Designing topics, tools and learning material Teaching performances Learning evaluation tools
	Designing and leading learning environments	Designing learning activities focused on students' individual differences Using active learning and interaction with students and teachers Innovating and creating tools, tasks and resources according to the students' features
	Evaluate of and for learning	Documents and activities prepared for the course final examination Documents and activities prepared and available on-line
	Social relationships	Leading learning environments Team work with colleagues to design projects and activities Promoting and leading meeting sand work groups with internal and external staff and stakeholders Presenter at meetings, workshops and conferences inside/outside Presenter and/or University delegate at project presentation
Organization	Research development	Drafting papers and books[individually and/or in cooperation with] PHD or Degree Tutors Referee of research projects Reports for internal and external information on university research Leading classes as research based communities and reporting results
	Working in an Organization as in a Professional Learning Community	Performance of the daily activities of the organization and responding to requests. Participation and peer work. Working with external people/stakeholders Updating the e-portfolio and self-evaluation
Institutional Identity	Promoting students' human and professional development	Helping students to define study plans [curriculum studiorum and Cv] Helping students to define Professional Projects [with reflections on ethical principles] Coaching students and enhancing their specific competencies Being available to meet students outside the classroom with face to face meetings and communication within digital environments. Pedagogical attention with students, recognized by students and colleagues.

Source: self-sourced.

6.   A NEW ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL AS A PROSPECT FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Research-action confirmed the importance of identifying a competence-based teacher profile (Zabalza, 2009), also as an opportunity for carrying out continuous development and improvement plans (Unesco, 2009). The process proved web2.0 and HRM effectiveness in building up-to-date higher education teacher profiles. Furthermore, it was possible, through on-going assessment-based HRM, to evaluate the quality of teacher competencies. Such self-assessment actions carried out by the teachers are also subject to hetero-assessment that can potentially be carried out by tutors, colleagues, external experts or students. To make this possible, digital portfolios (e-porfolio) or personal learning environments (PLE) should be implemented, to create places where teachers can support their profiles and path, share their experiences and receive feedback which is significant to the continuous improvement process. Such tools trigger processes that reinforce the identity of the university institution, which should support the enhancement process involving its own teachers and its own quality level through the actions carried out by the executive and administrative staff. According to Sergiovanni (2000), this aspect generates intellectual capital or the ability of an organization, and of its staff, to learn, learn again, carry out research and improve the ability of identifying issues in order to improve teaching and learning: another remarkably significant element for identifying the level of quality of an organization.

Future research may focus on how Personal and Social Digital Learning Environments help teachers to effectively transform and enhance their practices. In addition, Personal and Social Digital Learning Environments are part of a social network that teachers can use for inviting – and for getting connected with - colleagues, external supervisors and external experts and assessors in order to evaluate their progress. Research could concentrate on how the social network contribution may become a peer-evaluation and feedback tool for improvement. It might be interesting to verify if the Personal and Social Digital Learning Environments are contexts in which metacognition processes able to influence teachers' beliefs and practices transformation are encouraged.

In this sense, the main focus is on the enhancement of teachers and of their history which - supported over time by their personal profile and path, narrating their own experiences and receiving feedback significant to continuous improvement - expresses the cultural and intellectual capital generated by university institutions.

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ALTERNATIVE MEDIA STRENGTHENING AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS IN AFRICAN PROTRACTED CRISES AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED TERRITORIES: CAN PARADIGM SHIFTS ASSIST AND RELIEF?

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ABSTRACT

Community Media as Alternative Media Strengthening and Support Mechanisms in African Protracted Crises and conflict-affected Territories is an imperative necessity for the African reality. In today's world and with special emphasis on Africa, there is enough knowledge but little courage to address chronic and complex challenges especially in the Media fronts. Therefore, Paradigm shifts from Elite Knowledge sharing to Community Knowledge and Experience Sharing at large, and furthermore, from State-monopolized Media to Community-managed Media become likely a basic need and necessity for the African numbed communities. The tyrannical regimes prevailing in the African Continent are erecting every possible constraining barriers and denying the access of media houses to that territories targeted by their discriminative, sophisticated modern local apartheid, scorched earth policies and at the same time practicing horrible numbing on its population. These regimes have the complete State-owned or para-statal Media monopoly and they absolutely do not allow any transmission of whatsoever informative news unless it undergo through rigorous control, often done through dedicated security apparatus. Logically, this gloomy situation necessitates rapid and concrete actions and interventions, in particular additional and alternative media to silence-break and inform a wider public about that inhuman circumstances. Therefore, *ad hoc* concrete, consistent, constructive and coordinated Media Strengthening and Supportive Mechanisms should be put in place to scale-up the existing fragmented and scattered local African traditional and innovative media agencies serving the local communities. New media supportive and strengthening services can be realized through web-based media tools such as web-radio, web-based TV, as well as Media Networking Smart Mechanisms. This is also possible and obtainable following innovative partnering modalities. Shared visionary projects and programs can be identified, implemented, maintained and sustained with minimum financial and economic costs and maximum social and cultural benefits for the potential partnering stakeholders. For these motivations a multi-player projects, programs can be suggested in a shifting and evolving vision of knowledge and experience-sharing. Thus, participated media support projects and programs should prioritise to be SMART, simple, miserable, actionable, result-based, and time-bounded. The principal requirements for the success and sustainability of relative and relevant proposals can be identified in hard and soft infrastructures frameworks in addition to the voluntary human resource and political will. The inter-university international cooperation and community solidarity for development, among other actors can play major and proactive role in the African continent transformational shifts and beyond.

KEYWORDS AND CONCEPTS: *Smart and Alternative Media, Community Web-based Media, Knowledge and Experience Sharing, Pro-Conflict-Affected Communities, Information Communication Technologies, Cultural Exposures and Capability expression, Inter-University Solidarity for Development Cooperation, Transformational and Paradigm shifts.*

INTRODUCTION

As already known, for decades and decades in the African continent and even till today people have been living in dire humanitarian situations. The armed conflicts and successive civil wars have reduced African communities to the limits. The combined marginalization and oppression witnessed are aggravating factors especially in situation of absent, silent or silenced media. Currently, many African territories are hardly accessible and completely isolated from the media world for diversity of reasons and constraints.

Even the humanitarian organizations are not allowed to denounce and voice out the deteriorating and dire situations in terms of food and nutrition insecurity, absence of reliable education structures and systems, complete lack of sanitary and health infrastructure, resource grabbing, money laundering, green-washing, social and environmental injustice and exclusion, poor governance mechanisms, not to talk about the tragic daily aerial bombardment causing massive displacements towards all the domestic and neighbouring countries, continental and intercontinental mass migration and

exodus.

Especially, in the marginalized and impoverished territories, in urban slums, rural dwells, peripheral rurban outskirts, refugees camps as well as reaching the populations under siege in the caves, wondering in the bush, forests, mountains and valleys. An impelling media hard and soft infrastructures are needed to be a base for just peace, social justice and cohesion, rule of law, respect of universal human rights, democratic transformation and smooth transition, and above all human dignity restitution. The innovative social digital media and ICT can assist in that prospective and would play a proactive role in the service of the African communities within the continent and around the globe. To address this challenging reality, there is a need to suggest and implement practical solutions to this problematic scenario, considering the context specificity.

Alternative media have historically been a central force in social change. However, they do not uniformly subvert the hierarchies of access that have always been fundamental to mainstream media. In fact, their journalistic norms and routines have always drawn on the professional standards of the mainstream. The perception of 'mainstream' and 'alternative' as a misconception arguing that they have always existed on the same continuum and continue to converge [1]. In conflict-borne realities, alternative activist and community-managed media can play the role of the mainstream conventional media.

Media is related to different communication typologies, for instance, in scientific communications, communicating to the public involve three main groups of actors (scientist, journalist and the public) [2]. Likewise, in isolated conflict-affected areas, the communication mainly involves politicians (militarized or civil), ITC professionals and the dynamic public (communities).

Fig. 1 - Map of Africa

Communities exposed to cultural transient and transformational environments can be included in enabling and empowering information technology and communication projects and programs, which will allow and enhance their capability expressions for full economical, social, political and cultural inclusion and participation in non deprivable developmental arena.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed to extend this article is threefold:
i)   direct experience and observations of the Authors;
ii)   Simple open ended *ad hoc* questionnaire;
iii)   Semi-structured interviews with privileged informants.

Briefly:

1. Storytelling
2. Self-administered Questionnaire which are online web-based and with assisted respondents and
3. Web-based online Interview with privileged informants supplemented by photos and video from Journalist.

The direct experience is reported in a sort of story telling done by the others, being from and living in protracted crises and conflict-affected territory in Sudan and neighbouring countries. Worth to mention that the protracted crises and conflict-affected territories are characterized by the longevity and succession of crises, prevalence of aid flow and fragile economic and food and nutrition security status.

The questionnaire is composed of five core compulsory questions and 2 optional enquiries. The core questions asked are the following:

1. Do you agree that the Alternative Media is playing major roles than the conventional Media? If yes, please explain.
2. How can the Alternative Media be strengthened and supported?
3. How can the International Inter-university Cooperation and Solidarity assist in supporting the ICT and e-learning in protracted-crises and conflict-affected realities?
4. Do you agree that Knowledge and Experience sharing are effective in pushing towards major Mediatisation and Educational Scaling-up? If yes, please explain
5. Do you know any sort of innovative e-learning, social Media, capacity building, ITC instrument applicable in protracted-crises and conflict-affected realities?

While the optional enquiries were:

6. What sort of improvement and/or inquiry can be added to the abstract provided?
7. Do you have any additional inquiry to add? If yes, what is it?

The questionnaire was sent to about 50 stakeholders, and posted in the personal social media and web page of the principal author and blogs of the authors. Respondent to the questionnaire have had 2 weeks time to formulate their answers and sent it back. Their response were satisfactory enough, in particular those who are active in the Alternative and Activist Media. Alternative and Activist New Media [3] could be a suitable outlet in protracted crises and conflict affected African realities.

While the semi-structured interview was done via Skype (teleconference program) with expert journalists in the Diaspora and was not possible to carry it with another journalist in the war-affected areas due to security constraint.

The wider public in the social media (Facebook personal pages of the authors) reacted to the questions with likes, shares and comments.

The time has been major constraint to collect many answers and revert backs. However, the told stories, returned questionnaires, and conducted interviews were sufficient to address the themes put on the table for this e-consultation.

One of the oral respondents mentioned that the questionnaire formulated in English language is difficult for many potential respondents, and if possible to translate that in local languages, however, the author does not have sufficient time and means to carry that task.

Internet links to the event and author website has been reported in the questionnaire [4].

RESULTS

1. Story

My strongest experiences in the communication field have been in Kenya at the time of the post-electoral violence, (January-March 2008) and in Sudan, both before and after the independence of South Sudan (2011), particularly in the Nuba Mountains area.

When I started visiting the Nuba Mountains in 1995, the area was ravaged by civil war in a context of complete isolation. There was no communication by land, only by air, and if was very dangerous. The only information reaching the people from the outside was the government radio broadcasting. No telephone or any other communication apart from the extremely expensive satellite phone. The government propaganda was focusing in promoting religious and ethnic division. The liberation movement on its side insisted on the military aspect of the war, in the press releases coming out to the Nairobi office, that could not be seen and understood by the majority of the population. Therefore in an area as big as Northern Italy the only communication was oral. No printed or electronic communication whatsoever reached the people. No chances for the civilians to have their concerns and their problems heard and taken into consideration. From both sides the communication was basically top-down. Recently, while the civil war is still going on in a different political context, the modern means of communication are having a notable impact. On the rebels side there are two radio stations in the area, thought their range is very limited due to the mountainous nature of the area, and

there is a small but committed team of journalists armed with tape-recorders, cameras, video-recorders and with enough skills to edit and publish news related to the war, and on the government side there is a cellular telephone net-work, and a better organized communication and information collecting system, that sometime offer chances even to the opposition to make their opinions known. It is clear that the social and political awareness of the actors of this war has become more sophisticated and the participation of the civilian in the debated has become more important and there is the emergence of a public opinion. People are not ready any more to simply absorb pure propaganda, they are more and more responsible.

In the very different and much more sophisticated Kenyan context and the experience of almost three months of post-electoral violence in 2008 has proved to me that, in a society deeply divided along ethnic line like the Kenyan one, people are ready to believe the propaganda of their own side, in spite evidence to the contrary. In such situation the ability to collect, document, and disseminate accurate facts and to promote a healthy debate is absolutely essential to put people in control of their own life. In that context a few media owned by independent faith-based institution have played a key role to tone down the animosity and to promote the acceptance of the different political positions.

2. Questionnaire

Respondent A

1. Do you agree that the Alternative Media is playing major roles than the conventional Media? If yes, please explain.

"Yes, Alternative media has proven to challenge existing powers, to represent marginalized groups, and to foster horizontal linkages among communities of interest. Its dimensions in this case we talk of its content, aesthetic, modes of production, modes of distribution, and audience relations has given the reality on the ground unlike what we consume from the mainstream media. The convectional media has been playing to the gallery of its commercial interest or the government manipulation without key interest of championing for the human rights.

Communication scholar Robert W. McChesney [5], inspired in part by the work of Chomsky [6] and Herman [7], has linked the failures of the mainstream press primarily to corporate ownership, pro-corporate public policy, and the myth of "professional journalism." He has published extensively on the failures of the mainstream press, and advocates scholarship in the study of the political economy of the media, the growth of alternative media, and comprehensive media policy reforms."

2. How can the Alternative Media be strengthened and supported?
   a) Empowering the community to learn the skill of story-telling to increase the content of the alternative media.
   b) Replacing the current libertarian media model with one that operates democratically, rather than for profit
   c) Strengthening public service broadcasting
   d) Incorporating the use of alternative media into a larger discourse
   e) Increasing the role of citizen journalism
   f) Turning a passive audience into active participants
   g) Using mass media to promote democratic ideals

3. How can the International Inter-university Cooperation and Solidarity assist in supporting the ICT and e-learning in protracted-crises and conflict-affected realities?

"Talking with governments, the leadership and the donor community, to put emphasis in training of ICT from the early stages of development of the child in the affected arrears. i.e. Making the subject mandatory in primary, secondary and college level. Setting the infrastructure for ICT in the areas to aid learning."

4. Do you agree that Knowledge and Experience sharing are effective in pushing towards major Mediatisation and Educational Scaling-up? If yes, please explain

"Yes, I agreed. It helps to inform and empower all members of society, and enhances democratic values. It is a liberal-democratic approach to our studies that advocates the reformation of the mass media with an emphasis on public service broadcasting and audience participation, through the use of citizen journalism and alternative media channels.

The internet and in particular Web 2.0, is seen as a powerful medium for facilitating the growth of a media democracy as it offers participants, a potential voice, a platform, and access to the means of production. Because the web allows each and every person to share information instantly with few barriers to entry across a common infrastructure, it is often held up as an example of the potential power of a media democracy."

5. Do you know any sort of innovative e-learning, social Media, capacity building, ITC instrument applicable in protracted-crises and conflict-affected realities?

"It is apparent that in the widespread protests in the Middle East and North Africa known as the Arab Spring were orchestrated by social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The Citizens had the chance to quickly connect with one another, exchange information, and organize protests against their governments. While social media cannot solely be credited with the success of these protests, technologies played an important role in instilling change in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. These acts show a population can be informed through alternative media channels, and can

adjust its behaviour accordingly."

6. What sort of improvement can be added to the abstract provided?
"In countries with a high illiteracy rate, for example, it is difficult for average citizens to take part and fully engage with media, and adjust their behaviour accordingly in society. Instead of promoting democratic ideals, this would in turn fracture society into an upper-class that actively participates in creating the media, and a lower-class that only consumes it, leaving individuals open to the manipulation of information or media bias. It is therefore important to empower common citizens on the importance of media and involve them in all activities to make them be active participants."

Respondent B

1. Do you agree that the Alternative Media is playing major roles than the conventional Media? If yes, please explain.
"Alternative media are important because they can reach everybody and can be used by everybody with minimal training, and in certain difficult conditions they can gather and disseminate information that the institutional media cannot or do not want to access."

2. How can the Alternative Media be strengthened and supported?
"Training. Popular education. Formation of small clubs and information points with a minimal technical support that with a minimal cost can be sources of knowledge and information."

3. How can the International Inter-university Cooperation and Solidarity assist in supporting the ICT and e-learning in protracted-crises and conflict-affected realities?
"Teams able to intervene and adapt to the local situation and provide training and simple, essential equipment."

4. Do you agree that Knowledge and Experience sharing are effective in pushing towards major Mediatisation and Educational Scaling-up? If yes, please explain.
"I agree. We have seen the Nuba report Team do miracles with in spite of the low departure point, with journalists barely able to communicate in English but becoming able to provide extremely effective coverage."

5. Do you know any sort of innovative e-learning, social Media, capacity building, ITC instrument applicable in protracted-crises and conflict-affected realities?
"I believe the most effective social media during conflict in Africa is community radio and human rights monitoring with use of portable small video-cameras."

3. Interview with a journalist

The interview was conducted stemming from the main questionnaire in a free way of answering [8].

1. Do you agree that the Alternative Media is playing major roles than the conventional Media? If yes, please explain.
Actually, the alternative media has played great and influential role in transforming the society in North Africa and specially in contexts where there are oppressive regimes denying freedom of expression and basic and fundamental rights, access to media and gagging and harassing journalists. In realities such as Sudan, the number of Social Media users is very limited, but it is efficient and effective and used by activists inside and outside the country. Through the Social media and personal websites, the information become available even for users in very remote areas and villages, through the phones connected to satellite internet, digital remote webcams, and the world has become ever connected with that remote areas not like in the past. So any change or notable event become widely disseminated and diffused within no time and transmitted consequently.

In Egypt, Tunis, and other aggressive and oppressive regimes, the youth gained and took advantage of the available social media and achieved and developed great communication capacities and led the wide public through that innovative instruments of the social media, so the social media constituted alternative media counter opposing the regimes mainstream conventional media. Despite of the close surveillance and controls by that regimes, some external institutional arrangements assisted those youth and activists and through certain systems of codifications and creation of alternative nicknames and fantasy modalities, they managed to communicate effectively and timely.

So, substantially, the alternative media is becoming popular and playing a role of the mainstream conventional areas and continue to do so.

2. How can the Alternative Media be strengthened and supported?
The alternative media can be strengthened and supported through many options, to mention but a few:

- That can be done through direct donations
- Building websites

- Facilitate accessibility to the web
- Upload ready contributions
- Enhance and encourage data and information collection and correspondence
- Protect the activist by obscuring the physical locations
- Diffuse songs, short stories, novels, news, photos
- Train in the main journalistic capacities such as interviewing capacities, public opinion collection, news gathering, journalistic investigation
- Offering jobs in media houses and encourage popular journalism
- Build capacities in photo and video journalism, Event organisation coverage
- Research for original and historic cultural master pieces of song, poetry and heritage
- Provision of useful electronic links
- Moral support
- Constructive criticism

3. How can the International Inter-university Cooperation and Solidarity assist in supporting the ICT and e-learning in protracted-crises and conflict-affected realities?

That can be and cannot be. Essentially it depends on the financial availability and support and willingness to build the capacities of the needy. For example, in Sudan there are no means and instruments such as cameras, laboratories, training materials, to prepare capable medial professionals. and Recently the universities have lost their spirit of conducing genuine preparations of their students, and limited the freedom of research and journalistic investigation, and by that the universities become only universities in names without much substances, eluding the students and wasting precious time and resources of the students. In the past the students used to prepare concrete projects and participate in the public awareness and social enlightening, combat the socially destructive habits such as the FGM, conducing scientific and practical tours to the remote areas in Gedarif, Dungula, Nuba Mountains, and even to Europe, but the students are mobilized for ideological and religious governmental interests. Ad to that the teachers are increasing leaving the country and migrating to the Arab grabbing countries, and those who remain are not sufficiently dedicated and less qualified to carry their mission. Therefore, the International Inter University cooperation can play a supportive and assisting role, if it put in consideration that terrible reality and act consequently. And that need political will and money.

4. Do you agree that Knowledge and Experience sharing are effective in pushing towards major Mediatisation and Educational Scaling-up? If yes, please explain

Definitely yes, but before that, certain conditions should prevail. For example, if we consider the KSA. And, in particular, in Libya during the era of Gaddafi, people are living in certain degree of welfare, economically citizens were in excellent conditions, however they were culturally and socially deprived. For example, in the universities, there were no teaching of philosophy nor sociology, and there was no freedom of press, and the syllabus forbid teaching Ibn Khaldon because his philosophy considered against the modernity and against the bedews and accordingly for any rule, there are exceptions, good universities, ideal income, Mediatisation gagging and cultural oppression. So Knowledge sharing and education does not necessary travel hand in hand with the major Media Freedom.

5. Do you know any sort of innovative e-learning, social Media, capacity building, ITC instrument applicable in protracted-crises and conflict-affected realities?

Yes, that is achievable through training of trainers, in absence of pollicised governments, oppressive security and intelligence apparatus, examples:

- Film making by the suitable available and normal mobiles is one of the options accessible to many users
- Mobile digital Cinema, which is easy to erect in remote settings.
- Web-streamed courses and exams by e-correspondence

6. What sort of improvement can be added to the abstract provided? When can the Media be used as positive instrument and mean to upgrade the welfare and living conditions in conflict and crises areas?

The abstract is fine in this format. Always, the Media can be more instrumental in the coming transformational stance to play its core mission.

7. Do you have any additional inquiry to add? If yes, what is it?

- What are the requirements to create effective and efficient functional alternative media?
- What are the potentials of the alternative media?
- What type of professionalism is needed to create and support the alternative media?
- What are the major missions of the writing, web-broadcasting, photo and video journalist?
- Why are journalists frequently in marathon behind the authorities and reporting what they deem suitable, instead of adopting professionalism and non-biasness?

- What are the reasons behind the under and misreporting?
- Why do some journalists use their media power to shine or gloom rivals?
- How to isolate the useless Media operators, and place the suitable person in the right positions?
- Why does governments avail all the state Media apparatus only to the journalist expressing their mainstream lines?

The interview is concluded by a request to call for professional symposium which invites experts and stakeholders to come with papers and contributions that can support the spirit of this paper and documentary [9].

From this quick formulated paper emerged eight addressable challenges and Needs which can be enumerated as:

Need 1. SMART Alternative Media – Imperative Necessity
Need 2. Community Web-based Media – Up-and-out Scaling
Need 3. Knowledge and Experience Sharing – Media Capacity Gaps Reduction
Need 4. Pro-Conflict-Affected Communities – Solidarity for Sustainable Cooperation and Peace Building
Need 5. Information Communication Technologies – Innovative, Adaptable and Adoptable, and Resilient Tools
Need 6. Cultural Exposures and Capability Expression – Respect and Acceptance of Diversity
Need 7. Inter-University Cooperation in Solidarity for Development Cooperation – Understanding Complex and Enabling pathways.
Need 8. Participatory Workshops and Symposium, constitution of permanent and permeable panel of experts and stakeholders.

SUMMARY

From this brief participatory action research, emerged that the Alternative Media is becoming more popular in protracted crises and conflict-affected territories, such as the current South Sudan. There are plenty and blended strengthening and supporting mechanism, and the International Inter-university cooperation and solidarity can play a proactive role in boosting such enabling pathways. the participants recommend organization of workshops and symposium and constitution of panel of experts and stakeholders to deeply address that challenging and imperative domain.

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