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RESEARCH ARTICLE

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AFRICAN HEALTH RESEARCHERS IN AFRICA WITH BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT AND UNIVERSITY CO-OPERATION - A CASE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

An efficient Brazilian co-operation programme within the undergraduate and post graduation courses was created in 1981 to enable students coming from developing countries to take on their post graduate courses. So far, about 1,600 undergraduate and postgraduate students were selected, from that 20% comes from Africa. We have reviewed the strengths and weaknesses to emphasize the impact of PhD research training agreement between Brazil and Angola within the scientific community. Also how Angolan PhD works will have an effect on Brazilian student. It took several steps in Angola to make possible to research, such as to meet a relevant research subject for the country, as well as for the under graduation programme, the sponsorship and the project manager, the responsibility to maintain this co-operation between countries in a long term and, finally, to enhance a powerful network among Angola, Africa and Brazil.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1981, the Brazilian Government developed a programme involving three ministries: of Foreign Affairs, of Education and of Science & Technology to enable students coming from developing countries to take on a post graduation course in Brazilian Universities. This international programme has contributed to prepare researchers in the developing world. Brazilian Higher Education Personnel Training Coordination (Capes), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Division of Educational Topics (DET) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) have turned into public interest to select new candidates every year from developing countries, the ones Brazil has a cooperation agreement (1).

Brazilian universities with postgraduate courses recognized by Capes have to accept such students, which will receive all the support needed in order to study in that country, e.g. flight tickets, scholarship and diploma nationally recognized. In the last decade, more than 1,600 postgraduate students were selected, 75% of which comes from North and

South America, 20% from Africa and 5% from Asia, particularly from East Timor (1).

From 2000 to 2014, the first author of this written paper is one of 465 African postgraduate students, as well as one of 59 Angolan students to take part of the Brazilian PhD Program., which empowered a strong international research network. (1)

Within my four-years 'experience as a Brazilian advisor to Angolan PhD students, I have had difficulties that involved meeting a relevant research topic to his country, financial support and project management, as well as the responsibility to build and maintain this project.

To address a relevant research topic for Angola and postgraduate programme

Several methods were used to collect relevant information, including literature review from the international speech made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) through the Division of Educational Topics (DET) in 2011, candidate application, acceptance letter by UNESP within the Women's Health postgraduate programme, focused on diabetes and pregnancy, as it is the last author and student tutor area.

To complete the course, meeting these co-operation programme requirements, any student should take some lectures and develop a research project together with his tutor. Data were also drawn from the Brazilian Higher Education Personnel Training Coordination (Capes) and from Unesp Pro- Vice- Chancellor for undergraduate and post graduate studies in documents/ website. Http: // www. fmb.unesp.br /#!/pos-graduacao.

The financial support and project management

This project aimed at better National Health Service in Angola, taking into consideration the maternal health index. However, there were limitations to manage the project caused by the visa refusal, which did not allow the advisor to come to Angola Huambo Motherhood to supervise the samples' collection. ..Then, the patient submitted to cesarean section was excluded of the project since this surgery procedure was made outside the Motherhood.

Firstly, we chose to study Metabolic Syndrome (MetS)/ HIV associated, but many challenges were found. Mean while, considering the high prevalence of MetS in many African countries and its influence on maternal health and adverse perinatal outcome (Negrato *et al* 2009), having MetS as one of the research subject in postgraduate programme, led us choose for MetS research project in non-diabetic pregnant women in Angola.

Another challenge faced throughout the project was purchasing the necessary kits for laboratory analysis. Also, international border challenges sending biological samples from Angola to Brazil, which had a great impact on the decision of the diagnostic criteria to be used in Angolan pregnant women to confirm MetS. Literature review showed the possibility to choose four different criteria for MetS diagnosis; two of them are currently used outside pregnancy and the other two are for pregnancy.

Responsability to build and maintain the next generation of African researchers

The PhD findings could be seen by the advantages of these programmes to empower: African researchers, Brazilian advisors, scientific community of Women Reproduction field and strengthening the international research network between Unesp and Angola's Universities (1, 3).

The success of this mixed country PhD research training could be confirmed by two scientific papers published by the research group that was formed in Huambo Motherhood supervised by the PhD student that started after this cooperation. (4, 5)

Building the next generation of African researchers has provided innumerable gains, such as the relationship between student and his tutor, as the tutor experienced different practices and conditions than the ones she had known before (6,7)

The four-year work between Angolan PhD student and Brazilian tutor has improved the quality of supervision and doctoral education which shows a vital component of the university's research efforts and contributes significantly to Unesp's research profile. The overseas matters funded to be transferred during the course of the project associated with difficulties to send biological samples from Angola to Brazil

are hindering aspects of the research development. African scientists need to have greater control over research in their own countries, in order to develop a fruitful research capacity.

After the end of this research, the local conditions of the site for new projects was established; the subject of research be useful not only for individual training, institutional and organizational development, but also for Angola Health System.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this case report carries on the strong Brazilian PhD programme for developing countries in terms of human resources development. It is necessary to be linked with local infrastructure in order to strengthening national research systems (Lansang MA & Dennis R, 2004). This competitive fellowship training program offered through bilateral development cooperation is part of global initiatives and Brazilian goals for reducing inequalities among people and represents an effective approach to complement academic degree offerings. Another result of this South to South cooperation is the creation of a network between African (Angola) and Brazil (Unesp) contributing to integrate an African research community from Angola with us. Investments in training more researchers are crucial to enhance regional networks in order to create a synergistic commitment of African and Brazilian researchers. With this PhD programme, Brazil and its universities are certainly contributing to build the next generation of African researchers.

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