



Wittenberg-Center for Global Ethics

Africa Workshop 2007

“Entrepreneurial Spirit and the Comparative Advantages of Africa”

Concept Paper
Application until 10th of May 2007

Contact

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Main Sponsor:

The Coca-Cola Company

The Center

The Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics (WCGE) is an initiative founded by Ambassador Andrew Young and former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. The mission of the Center is to identify common ethical core principles that promote peace, justice and prosperity in the emerging world society. Based in the world-known historic city of Wittenberg, we stimulate a global dialogue with current and future leaders from politics, business, and civil society.

Since 2002, the Wittenberg Center is pursuing the program "**Building Global Cooperation – New Alliances with Africa**". It is designed as a common working program that stimulates mutual understanding and collective learning. It aims at bringing together stakeholders from business, politics and civil society and offers them both an organizational platform as well as the conceptual framework for rethinking prevailing mental models. This approach is based on the idea that despite a plurality of different values and individual perspectives ethical core principles such as mutual respect, trust and true partnership support mutually beneficial interchange.

The program thus aims at changing existing paradigms in order to promote consciousness for global issues, mutual dependencies and worldwide inclusion as well as to empower individual and collective action. Changing paradigms means to question and rethink classical mental models in order to understand others' needs and interests. Thereby, new insights and solutions can be found, which satisfy every side ("win-win-situations"). Thus the idea of "Building Global Cooperation" is based on mutual beneficial exchange and mutual respect.

In this spirit, the Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics regularly organizes, Africa Forums, Young Leader Seminars and Africa Workshops.

The Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics in collaboration with the **Coca-Cola Company**, is organizing an Africa Workshop for graduate students and young leaders/professionals. Stemming from the Africa Forum 2006, in Wittenberg, Germany, the umbrella theme for the Workshop to be conducted in Wittenberg from the **29th to 31st of May 2007** is "**Entrepreneurial Spirit and the Comparative Advantages of Africa.**"

Conceptual Basics

The program aims to foster capacity building through enhancing the leadership qualities of international and specifically African Young Leaders. This is of vital importance for building a dynamic and modern society. Present and aspiring Leaders need to be equipped with the necessary tools to understand the complexity and interrelationships of the different sectors of their society. Together they have the chance to embark on an innovative and dynamic new path into the future.

The Wittenberg Center is at the forefront of creating an African Future Leadership fellowship, where ambitious Young Leaders are gradually introduced into ethically orientated values of governance and development. This concept does not claim to contradict traditional African institutional mechanisms but to expose the essential ideas of tradition to the evolving conditions of modern society.

The WCGE takes seriously the concept of individual responsibility. It considers the moral obligation of every individual to contribute to the common good as the basis for successful cooperation (normative conviction). At the same time the Centre considers individuals as empirical beings that always have to act under certain conditions of actions (positive conviction). These conditions sometimes induce individual actors to act in a way that is harmful to the community as well as – in the long run – for themselves. A majority of these conditions can't be changed by simply appealing to individual responsibility and moral obligation, but need collective investments by all parties involved.

The Center believes that such investments will only be made, if they are consistent with individual self-interest based on a proper (normative and positive) analysis of existent alternatives of action. The Centre's central aim is to provide the necessary judgment power for such investments following a 3-step approach that combines both normative as well as positive analysis:

- (1) What do we really want? What are our common (moral) ideals/visions?
(Normative analysis)
- (2) Why don't we have it? What are the conditions/constraints that prevent us from having (1)? How should conditions look like to have (1)?
(Positive analysis)
- (3) Taking into account (1) and (2): What can be expected to be done by the individual actor? Can we find incentives to invest in conditions that foster the realization of (1)?
(Combined normative/positive approach)

Therefore the aim is to initiate a new way of thinking in order to generate a shift in paradigm as far as conventional mental models are concerned. Through combined efforts of collective learning, motivation and joint responsibility, the establishment of a more peaceful and prosperous 'New World Order' will be inspired. The target is a world order where Africa is perceived and perceives itself as a continent of opportunity and progress and as a potential partner in Economic and Political Cooperation. The International as well as the African society will appreciate that investing into the conditions of societal collaboration yields mutual advantages.

Workshop Theme

"Entrepreneurial Spirit and the Comparative Advantages of Africa"

There is the assertion that Africa is not capable to fully utilize its diverse comparative advantages in today's globalized society. Africa is rich in resources and minerals; it has such excellent agricultural conditions to have approximately 3-4 harvests per year and an endless seeming market of a creative and flexible human capital. However, Africa's share in world trade was only 2 percentage points in 2005.

Most of the time, the African continent is reduced to a natural resources or primary commodity supplier. Those countries with abundance in natural resources, despite numerous reforms and structural adjustment programs, tend to still have little economic diversification and high dependency on the export of primary goods – individual countries' economies are highly at risk considering the changes of global market prices as the recent example of crash in the cotton industry of Burkina Faso has shown.

There has been an enhanced political stability in Africa. Economic conditions such as private sector investment and other similar activities, which play a key role in the development of viable and dynamic companies throughout Africa, providing jobs, goods and services, needed by millions of people, ultimately helping to support progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Nevertheless, manufacturing and processing capacities remain modest. Besides market entry barriers in the Western world, trade in Africa is also decelerated by factors such as mismanagement and weak institutions, a deficient infrastructure that increases the transaction costs. Also the business climate in Africa is only slowly advancing. Way too slow, one may be tempted to claim, considering the potentials at hand in the continent.

At the core of the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) -www.nepad.org- and "African Ownership", Africans have decided to take responsibility of their own future and reflect about their own possibilities for change and development. This is what we consider as Entrepreneurial Spirit. It is about leadership: ownership and responsibility, challenges, innovation and public spiritedness. Africa abounds with examples of great entrepreneurs – often women – who manage to survive under difficult circumstances.

But what hinders Africa to fully utilize its Comparative Advantages through entrepreneurial spirit? What are the constraints that deter individual actors from investing in promising projects that could better their lives and those of others? These constraints need to be identified and clearly analyzed to develop solid concepts and a decent plan of action and implementation. During the Africa Forum 2006, organized by the Wittenberg center, Prof. Mucavele, Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Secretariat, has called upon Africans to unite under a new spirit of partnership that takes Africa's problems not only as serious challenges but also as encouraging opportunities for change.

In this spirit, the Wittenberg-Center for Global Ethics in collaboration with the Coca-Cola Company invites graduate students and Young Leaders/Professionals from different cultural and historical backgrounds to come together and discuss these challenging questions with experts from various fields. In a world of interdependencies it is important to search for common solutions.

By exchanging experiences and examples of best cases, the participants will learn how cooperation can be organized for mutual advantage. For example, it could be analyzed how booming Asian countries, such as India and others, have managed to overcome existing impediments of successful cooperation and examined if and to what extent Africa could make use of that experience.

The workshop will create a forum for aspiring leaders to examine these topics from various perspectives. It will be an enriching and beneficial experience which would lead to the formulation of ten proposals as a result of the Workshop. These proposals will be used by the Wittenberg-Center for further progress on the issue.

Target Group

Participants will be selected from various nationalities and academic backgrounds. Applicants should be students or young professionals with excellent qualifications and experience in the fields related to the issue.

The Workshop is open to applicants of all nationalities with profound knowledge and deep interest in African development; persons with African background are particularly encouraged to apply, as this stays in line with the Wittenberg-Center's ambition to foster African leadership and capacity building.

Applicants need to include a short letter of motivation, a curriculum vitae as well as a (best) case study (business plan project) or an essay (socio-political and economical perspective) related to the topic (about 1,500 to 2,000 words). Since the Center aims at incorporating local knowledge, please feel free to make use of your personal experiences wherever appropriate.

Participation is limited to 20 Graduate students or Young Leaders/Professional. Please send your application to Globalcooperation@wcge.org until the **10th of May 2007**.

Benefits

The Africa Workshop aims to give present and future Leaders, particularly those with an African background, the opportunity to reflect and discuss in a wider context about the challenges and opportunities in Africa.

The insights gained during the Workshop will equip these leaders with the capability to reflect and to create opportunities for themselves as well as others, thus raising their potentials and aspirations.

The Workshop will provide a platform for reflection, networking discussion and the exchange of ideas. Participants will be encouraged to take initiative and to perceive the present challenges of their individual societies as an opportunity for reform and progress. Together they will strive to develop innovative concepts and networks.

Participants are going to receive an attestation from the WCGE and the best contributions shall be presented at the European African Business summit from the 5th to 9th of November 2007 in Hamburg Germany.

Place

The workshop participants will be accommodated in the LEUCOREA, the 500 years old University of Wittenberg. The LEUCOREA holds an excellent infrastructure with various seminar rooms, an auditorium (capacity 180 people) and an integrated Congress Hotel (45 beds). Wittenberg was always a place of international discourse and exchange. The reformers Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, Lucas Cranach, among others fulfilled their life missions in this German town. With a unique legacy of reformatory, intellectual and humanistic thinking, this small town once xx created a global impact. Moreover, it is the place where Anton Wilhelm Amo, the first African who ever studied at a University in Europe, gained his degree as a Doctor of Philosophy in 1734.

For this reason, it is no coincidence that this historical place has now become home to the Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics. Such an environment fosters inspiration, intellectual discourse and innovation.



LEUCOREA – the 500 years old University of Wittenberg

Costs

The Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics in collaboration with its sponsors and partners will provide accommodation and feeding.

For further information about the Wittenberg Center and our "Building Global Cooperation-New Alliances with Africa" program please see www.wcge.org and www.globalcooperation.org.