



AIAE GETS CAPACITY BOOST

Research and networking programmes of the African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE), received a boost recently as the Institute was competitively selected as one of the African Think Tanks under the Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Institutions Global Think Tank Grant Initiative. IDRC is one of the world's leading institutions in the generation and application of new knowledge to meet the challenges of international development. For nearly 40 years, IDRC has worked in close collaboration with researchers from the developing world to build healthier, more equitable and more prosperous societies.

The institutional grant facility is a great feat for AIAE based on how it outshone other competitors who also bid for the research. As a matter of fact, the initiative received nearly 300 proposals from a wide range of African Think Tanks that focus on broad national and international social and economic policy issues. Following a thorough and rigorous review process, 24 Think Tanks were selected from 11 East and West African countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda,

Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda.

A release from IDRC stated that the Think Tank Initiative is envisioned as a long-term investment over at least 10 years. The vision for this Initiative is that policymakers in participating countries consistently use objective, high quality research as part of developing and implementing policies that lead to more equitable and prosperous societies. To achieve this vision, the Initiative will target one critical input to the policymaking process which is policy relevant research by independent research organizations.

The Initiative intends to strengthen a select group of independent policy research organizations based in developing countries, so as to enable these

institutions provide objective, high-quality research that both informs and influences policy.

The objectives of the Initiative include; selection of a group of promising independent policy research organizations and assist them to assess critical areas of strength and weakness, and identify opportunities for improved organizational performance, provision of a combination

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Prof. Eric Eboh and other recipients of the IDRC Grant in Dakar Senegal recently

... makes case for Social Security

As a way of contributing its quota to the economic advancement of the country, African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE) has urged the government and other stakeholders to work towards ensuring an all inclusive and sustainable social security system in the country. This submission was made at the last Enugu forum held on 15th October, 2009.

Enugu Forum is a civic platform devoted to debating, proposing and using evidence-based analytic perspectives to inform and influence effective and credible public policies. The Forum connects key stakeholders from across government, private sector and civil society through policy seminars, roundtables, workshops and conferences. The purpose is to engender a shared stakeholder understanding of alternative policy options from the perspective of hard evidence rooted in scientific analysis.

In a communiqué issued at the end of the seminar which focused on Inclusive and Sustainable Social

Security in Nigeria, it was agreed that social security systems were justified by the empirical failure of economic policies and development paradigms which assume, what it called, automatic trickle-down effects.

The communiqué signed by Professor Eric Eboh, the Executive Director of the Institute said further that social security system in Nigeria was bedevilled with institutional weaknesses, paucity of data, poor planning,

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unstable funding and maladministration, adding that the sustainability of social security programmes in Nigeria is hindered by frequent policy



Dr. Nwafor, the lead discussant, at the Forum

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changes, lack of political will and poor succession of strategies.

It added that recent institutional and policy reforms in social security, particularly in pensions and health insurance, are commendable and many social assistance schemes that target the vulnerable segments of society such as the aged, sick, unemployed, homeless, disabled and poor often do not inspire public confidence because of low accountability and transparency.

It was recommended that more research should be done to investigate and advise on the financing requirements, cost-sharing models and suitable delivery channels for different target groups as well as the potential socio-economic impact of social security.

Other recommendations as contained in the communiqué stated that “Social security programmes should be legitimized by making it more inclusive and credible through mechanisms to ensure wider participation and ownership from

within the formal (public and private) and informal sectors. Greater intergovernmental and interagency coordination and better statistical database are required to develop and operate more transparent, accountable and effective social security system. Social security should be considered as an important element of sustainable development strategy, hence, it should be mainstreamed into national and sector planning through institutional criteria that ensure policy continuity, cost-of-living alignment and desired impact. The scale and coverage of existing social security schemes, such as the Contributory Pension Scheme, National Health Insurance Scheme, Conditional Cash Transfers, etc, should be enhanced. It is important for state and local governments to domesticate these initiatives for maximum impact at the grassroots.” The seminar attracted 120 participants all over the country.

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of general support funding and access to training and technical support to permit these organizations to achieve improvements in research quality, policy linkages and other aspects of organizational performance; and capturing and share learning about strategies for supporting and managing policy research organizations, in order to influence the future activities of the funding partners, think tanks, and other development actors.

Giving a brief history of how AIAE clenched the grant, the Executive Director of AIAE, Professor Eric Eboh described the process as very competitive and instructive. The African side of the Global Think Tank Initiative was launched in May 2009 alongside the annual general meetings of the African Development Bank. The institutional grant supports three capacity components: research and research networking; communication and policy linkages; and organisational strengthening. The programme will last for four years, in the first instance and renewable for another term.

BECANS II: AIAE Trains Field Officers

In line with its dogged commitment to the success of the Business Environment and Competitiveness Across Nigerian States, second cycle (BECANS II), African Institute for Applied Economics, Enugu (AIAE) has organised a training workshop for the field officers from the six geo political zones of the country. The workshop was held on the 27 to 28 October, 2009 at Valencia Hotels Abuja, Nigeria.

Launched in 2007, BECANS is a flagship project of AIAE aimed at showcasing how the federal, states and the local government in a federal state can play noble roles for conducive business environment. The programme is premised on an evidence-based stakeholder

dialogue and feedback for a better business

environment in the states across the country. The second cycle of the project (BECANS II) would provide opportunity to reach all the states of the federation and ensure wide participation by the stakeholders.

In his welcome address at the workshop, the Executive Director of the African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE), Professor Eric Eboh reminded the field officers comprising proven researchers from all parts of the country that the purpose of BECANS was to provide credible tool for local and foreign investors, civil society groups and the organised Private Sector (OPS) to dialogue with government for successful business operations.

He added that the research work would



Participants at the BECANS II Training in Abuja

provide scientific evidence for monitoring business environment for Nigerian states in a continual basis, saying it would also provide information tool for peer review, mutual learning and experience on best practices in Nigerian states.

On the basis for the workshop, he said it would give the participants the necessary skill needed to collect data while creating a synergy among the different field officers working towards a common goal.

He urged the field officers to ensure honesty in their conduct and keep all the necessary data so that the objective of the project would not be defeated. “It is the result of the data you give to us that will make a big success of this laudable project, so I expect us to be accurate and down-to-heart in all aspects of the research work”, he noted.

Shortly after Professor Eboh's address, the facilitators of the workshop presented their papers which were designed as guides for the researchers in the field. The facilitators included; Professor E.M Igbokwe, Dr. (Mrs) A.I. Achike, Dr. Vincent Onodugo, Dr. Jones Lemchi and Mr. Oliver Ujah.



The AIAE team poses with Field Officers at the BECANS II Training, held recently in Abuja

AIAE Congratulates New LCCI Boss

The African Institute for Applied Economics, Enugu (AIAE) has congratulated Otunba Femi Deru (FCA), on his position as the new president of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI). The Institute described the new position of Deru as a well deserved one "and will no doubt take the chamber to the topmost status in its vision as one of the leading public advocacy organisations in the country".

The Executive Director of AIAE, Professor Eric Eboh, in a congratulatory letter extolled the virtues of Otunba Deru, describing him as a chartered accountant, astute administrator and conscientious leader who will use its wealth of experience to further lift the chamber from where his immediate predecessor, Asiwaju Solomon Kayode Onafowokan (OON) paddled the canoe of the organisation to.

Recent Publications

The Institute recently published AIAE Research Paper 4, titled "Fiscal Federalism, Subnational Governance and MDGs in Nigeria"- authored by Professor Eric Eboh, the Executive Director.

Another recent publication is the first in AIAE flagship Macroeconomic Forecasting Working Paper Series. The paper, which is entitled: "Designing and Operationalizing Macroeconomic

Forecast Model for Nigeria: Context and Prospects" was co-authored by Oduh, M.O, Agu, C., Eboh, E.C, Urama, N.E., and Nwosu, E.

The series is designed to rapidly transmit less technical and more generalist information for the purpose of informing, enlightening and stimulating the scientific and policy-relevant discourse about macroeconomic forecasting issues. It is intended for cross-disciplinary readership audience in academia, government, civil society and development community.

AIAE Peer Learning Series

The September edition of the Peer Learning Series was held on 16th September, 2009 with a presentation made by Mr. Chinedum Nwoko on theme: Public Expenditure Frameworks in Nigeria theories and applications. The programme was attended by AIAE's Associates Fellows and other individuals from all over Nigeria.

New Appointments In AIAE

The Executive Director of AIAE, Professor Eric Eboh has been elected the President of the Nigeria Agricultural Policy Research Network (NAPRNet). Prof. Eboh was chosen as the pioneering president of the Network based on his track record of designing and implementing research, particularly the scientific surveys of households and firms, under several international networks and organisations, amongst his many other skills and values.

NAPRNet was established early last year as an authoritative and independent forum for promoting research for evidence-based agricultural and rural development policies in Nigeria.

The human capital capability of the AIAE was boosted in August as Prof. (Mrs) Nkechi Mbanefoh joined the Institute as the Project Associate of



Prof. (Mrs.) Mbanefoh

the IDRC-supported research programme. She will use her wealth of experience to track and document all activities and outputs of the research teams, liaise with team coordinators to ensure smooth and efficient running of the teams and track the work of the research teams to achieve the workplan and timetable of the programme among others.

Mr. Sola Oluwadare also joined the Institute in November, 2009 as Communication/Stakeholders Relations Manager. Oluwadare holds Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) and Master of Science (M.Sc.) degrees in Economics of the University of Ado Ekiti and the University of Ibadan respectively; specializing in public sector economics. A UNIDO trained media executive, Oluwadare was a co-winner of the maiden edition of the Nigerian Breweries Golden Pen Award and a member of the Nigerian



Mr. Sola Oluwadare

Economic Society (NES). He is a prolific writer with special interest in human and public management and public policy advocacy.

As the AIAE's image-maker, he is responsible for coordinating and organizing the dissemination of the Institute's research to the media, academia, government, private sector, civil society and international development agencies.

As a way of maintaining best practice and international standard in the Finance Unit, the Institute recently appointed Mrs Aka Olivia as the Internal Audit Officer. Mrs Aka holds Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree in Accountancy from the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus. She has attended several workshops and conferences targeted towards strengthening her functions in business risk management. Mrs. Aka was before her appointment the Financial Assistant in the Institute.



Mrs. Olivia Aka

PARTNERSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS

On September 24th 2009 the Institute signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Centre for Economic and International Studies (CEIS), University of Rome, Tor Vergata, Italy. CEIS is an internationally recognized research centre in the Faculty of Economics, University of Rome. Professor Eric Eboh signed on behalf of the AIAE while Professor Giovanni Tria endorsed the document for CEIS.

The Executive Director, Prof. Eric Eboh led a team of AIAE's staff including Prof. (Mrs.) Mbanefoh, Mr. Chiwuike Uba, Mr. Sola Oluwadare, Mrs. Aka Olivia, and Mr. Emeka Celestine Nzeh

to participate in the conference co-organised with one of its partners; African Technology Policy Studies (ATPS):ATPS 2009 International conference on the theme: "Africa's Response to Global Challenges through Science, Technology and Innovation". The programme held November 24 - 27, 2009.

Prof Eboh presented a paper at the conference titled "Towards an Integrated Policy Response to Global Financial Crisis,

Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Poverty through STI: Avoiding Type 1 and Type 11 Errors." He was also one of the Lead Discussants in other topics.

Mr Sola Oluwadare also attended a one-day government Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) dialogue on the Conditional Grants Scheme (CGS) and Monitoring the Virtual Poverty Fund (MVPF) which took place in Enugu. It was



AIAE Staff pose with the Policy Analysis and Research Group, Dept of Economics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, during its visit to the Institute in December, 2009

held on Monday December 7, 2009. He also joined the NGOs and CSOs to draft the presentation on the proposed Federal government constitution amendment which was presented before members of the Senate Committee on Constitutional Amendment, who were in South East Nigeria between 14th and 15th December, 2009.

Emeka Celestine Nzeh, Research Fellow/Associate Fellow Liaison Officer of the Institute recently participated in International Conference/Workshop of African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) held at National Universities Commission Abuja from November 24-27, 2009. During the Conference Emeka Nzeh presented a paper titled "Study of Technological and Farming Systems Adaptation to Climate Change in Farming Communities of Enugu State, Nigeria".

AIAE participated in the Forum of Federations' five-day retreat on fiscal federalism in Nigeria held at the Rockview Hotel, Abuja between 9th and 13th November, 2009. The Institute was represented by Mr. Onyukwu O. Onyukwu, the Training Coordinator.

The retreat aimed at initiating a network of experts on fiscal federalism in Nigeria that would work towards bolstering the quality of policy and intergovernmental cooperation on fiscal relations. The retreat was organized by Forum of Federations, Nigeria in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Finance, Nigeria Governors' Forum, Revenue Allocation Mobilization and Fiscal Commission and the Nigeria Economic Society.

Press Clips

The *Nigerian Tribune* conducted one page interview with the Executive Director, Prof. Eric Eboh titled: "Harsh Business Environment, Major Obstacle for Entrepreneurship", on Monday 19 October, on Page 38.

A congratulatory message to the new president of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Otunba Femi Deru: *Leadership* Newspapers Thursday December 10, 2009, page 11, *The Nation*, December 10, 2009 page 24, *The Guardian*,

Wednesday December 16, 2009 page 42, *The Nigerian Tribune*, Monday December 14, 2009, page 43.

The appointment of the Communication/Stakeholders Relations Manager, Mr. Sola Oluwadare was reported in several newspapers including included: *The Nigerian Tribune*, November 19, 2009 Page 40, *The Nation* November 30 2009, *Vanguard* November 19, 2009, Punch December 2, 2009, *The Guardian* December 3, 2009, *Financial Standard*, Monday November 23, 2009 and others.

In October 2009 Enugu Forum was reported by *The Guardian* on Thursday November 5, 2009, *Sun Newspapers*, November 3, 2009, page 49.

The Institute success in winning a competitive grant in the IDRC Think Tank Initiative was reported in *The Vanguard*, of December 24, 2009, page 27.

Training of field Officers for BECANS II in Abuja was reported by *The Guardian* November 3, 2009, page 17, *The Nigerian Tribune* November 3, 2009.