

Report of the CODESRIA/CASB Summer School

Introduction

The Second CODESRIA/CASB Summer School took place from 21 to 26 August, 2016, in Dakar. It was attended by 10 laureates selected from applicants across the continent, 4 nominated and funded by the Centre for African Studies in Basel and 1 interested student who approached the School in Dakar and asked to attend. Faculty consisted of four senior scholars, two from the University of Basel (Ralph Weber and Elísio Macamo) and two indicated by CODESRIA, Nkolo Foe and Jean-Bernard Ouedraogo.

There were about 280 applications. The main selection process took place in Basel and was conducted by the same selection committee that had selected participants for the first Summer School, namely Elísio Macamo, Lucy Koechlin and Noemi Steuer. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to compare notes with CODESRIA to ensure that criteria more relevant to the Council were taken into account. The main criteria deployed by the Basel selection committee consisted of scholarly excellence, thematic relevance, gender balance and geographical balance. Generally speaking, applications were of good quality. Any other set of 10 laureates would most probably have been of equal quality as the one that was confirmed.

The Summer School

The theme of the School was "Basic and Applied Research". The idea behind this theme was to invite participants to

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engage in a discussion of an issue that has become increasingly important in recent years. Owing perhaps to legitimate development concerns that call for the practical relevance of research, a considerable amount of social science research in Africa has been applied in orientation. This raises two related issues. One concerns the extent to which scholarship in Africa can develop within an intellectual environment that places emphasis on the search for practical solutions. Indeed, to the extent that applied research is guided by the logic of practice, and not by the logic of discovery (which is arguably the case with basic research), there is a sense in which it could be said that this kind of research offers little scope for conceptual and theoretical innovation. The other issue concerns research funding policy. In fact, more and more research money goes towards applied research which in very important respects seems to confirm the status of consultancies as the most legitimate way of gathering knowledge for policy.

The aim of the Summer School was to engage participants in the discussion of these issues as a way of pursuing an important part of CODESRIA's intellectual agenda which consists in reclaiming African knowledge. Unfortunately, and

perhaps typically, the call was not understood by most applicants in the spirit it was written. Most thought that they were going to learn how to produce policy relevant knowledge! Most of the work of the Summer School, therefore, consisted in dissuading them of this view and refocusing their attention. Unlike in the first edition of the School, the programme was slightly changed. In the morning sessions, laureates were given enough time to present their work – in the run up to the School they had been asked to select a day and a particular topic under which they wanted their work discussed. The presentations were discussed by all, but the lead was taken by one resource person who was in charge of the day. In the afternoon, the resource person in charge gave a keynote that brought the issues together and pointed the way forward. This was the case for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Monday was the introductory day and Friday was reserved for a more practical workshop bearing on the practical implications of the discussion. Unfortunately, because of the realization that many laureates had difficulties in formulating their research question most of the time of the Friday workshop was taken up helping them – through exercises – to get a better handle on this crucial moment in their research process.

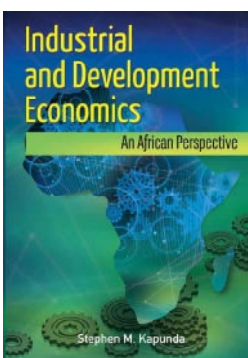
Final words

The Summer School was successful. The participants were highly motivated and the working atmosphere was excellent.

Industrial and Development Economics

An African Perspective

Stephen M. Kapunda



Industrial and Development Economics: An African Perspective aims at providing undergraduate and postgraduate students comprehensive understanding of industrial economics and its applicability to African development. Most of development issues and appendices are essentially for postgraduate students. The text is also excellent for self-study for all people with a keen interest in the discipline because of the unique approach adopted by the author. Each chapter is arranged pedagogically starting with learning objectives followed by introductory remarks, then content and finally conclusion. Numerous relevant examples, case studies and review questions are provided.