

New network brings together students in Africa and Europe

A project to establish a unique network for doctoral students and early career researchers in African and European countries was launched yesterday, 3 November 2011, by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) at the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) in Doha, Qatar.

DocLinks will raise awareness of doctoral education and create, what is reported as, the first-ever single publicity channel for resources relevant to PhD study, and establish contact and exchange between PhD students and early career researchers in Africa and Europe.

Professor John Wood, secretary general of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, anticipates that the project will make a valuable contribution to students and universities across both continents. 'The long-term aim of DocLinks is to feed into policymaking and strategic development in higher education in the EU and in Africa. I am delighted that the ACU will play a pivotal role in bringing together key players to help map out a new direction for doctoral education in the regions concerned', he said.

DocLinks, which is supported by the Erasmus Mundus programme of the European Union, will run over two years. The initial phase will analyse the needs of the target audience, while the second phase will include the development of a website and virtual platform for interaction, as well as two residential schools. The ACU is coordinating the project with six other African and European partners.

Partners in the DocLinks - Increasing Understanding and Establishing Better Links between African and European Doctoral Education Candidates project are:

- The Association of Commonwealth Universities, United Kingdom (co-ordinator)
- Eurodoc, The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, Belgium
- French Speaking University Agency, Belgium
- Irish African Partnership for Research Capacity Building, Ireland
- University of Jyväskylä, Finland
- University of Botswana, Botswana
- African Academy of Sciences, Kenya

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