Post-Graduate Diploma in Population Policy Analysis program

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Introduction

• The universities have a specific roles:
  • Ensuring capacity building in the field of population.
  • And carry out research that will eventually inform policy-making and program designs.

• A concern that few research results find their way into planning, program design and policy formulation.

• A Post Graduate Diploma in Population Policy Analysis (PPA) in the North-West University, was specifically designed to overcome this problem.
**Background - Mafikeng Declaration**

- Population and Development in Africa - Research and Policy Dialogue for Action resolved to:
  - promote the use of research findings to improve the formulation of policies and the implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects…” And also to “increase the national and international capacity” to do that.

**Development of PPA program**

- The North-West University was identified as having the capacity to host this program.
- The University had already fully-fledged program on Population and Sustainable Development.
- Experts were brought in to develop the curriculum - Prof Ntozi from Makerere University, the late Prof Gaisie and Prof Groenewald.
UNFPA and Dept. of Social Development support.

- Financial support from UNFPA for the development of the Centre of Excellence.
- DoSD to provide financial support to international students for the next 5 years (2014-2019) and committed itself to continue.
- Further assistance from DoSD: R200,000 each year (a total of R1 million) to assist in the running of the program over 5 years.

Contents and final endorsement

- 1 year program (coursework and research project.
- Emphasis on the nexus.
- The Program was introduced to AU at a meeting held in Addis Ababa in 2013
Program

- The first cohorts of students started in June 2014 - 6 students, 2 from countries in the region.
- The program has continued since then, and is in its 5th year this year.
- Composition of the students has changed: More 50% of students come from countries outside South Africa.
- Among others, Egypt, Liberia, Gambia, Kenya, Uganda Zimbabwe and Tunisia.

Program (cont)

- Participants from different regions bring along experiences from their countries – this has greatly enriched the program.
- Believe that the sharing of experiences and ideas will go beyond the classroom and enhance future relationships in this area.
- The program has received feedback about possible improvements, but also encouraging in different aspects,
Challenges

- Admission process of international students takes time due to other requirements (SAQA).
- In two occasions where the process could not be started on time, the University gave permission for the program to start in the middle of the year and flow to the next.
- SAQA requirements - I would like to commend the DoSD for continuously coming in-between to smooth the process so that there will be no delays.

Where is the program going?

- The program is expanding: The number of applications for this year has doubled.
- The Masters program in PPA has been approved - although still to be implemented
- Possibility of opening Open Distance Learning within the next 5 years – to minimise the period in which the student is away from the employer.
- However, there will be still a need for contact (meeting with supervisor; software training etc.)
- Access to technologies that will enable such exercise may be a challenge in some cases, (internet, for example).
Partnerships

• The program succeeded through the support from Department of Social Development, (the Population Unit section).

• In 2014, the University and DoSD signed a Memorandum of Understanding through which:
  • Each year international students would be given a bursary for 5 years.
  • The program received financial support - (R200 000 yearly) to help in some of the administrative issues.

Many thanks to the following

• The organisers of this Conference,
• The government of Tunisia
• Dept. of Social Development in SA
• UNFPA – South Africa