



February 19, 2020

EMPOWERMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICANS IN CHINA

COVID-19 OUTBREAK RESPONSE SERIES (C-ORS)

1.Executive Summary

There are thousands of African students in China. Every city in China is affected by the strict, effective epidemic control measures currently in place as set by the government. Although China is still listed as a developing country, it is no longer a conventional developing country based on the capacity it has displayed in handling various aspects of this epidemic. In the ongoing fight, China has received support from many countries and organizations. Nigerians in Diaspora Organization, East China and Next Level Educational Foundation International have set up a series of engagements aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of Africans in China especially with respect to academic, financial and emotional stabilization.

Working with partners such as Hujiang Educational Technology Co. Ltd. and Ants Plan; and supporters such as Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Shanghai, Shanghai Mingde Learning Organization Institute and Lifelong Learning Office of the Yangpu District Government, we have designed a highly demanded resource themed 'Science and Art of Academic Publishing' (SAAP). SAAP has proven and measurable benefits for African participants as well as Chinese professors who work with these participants.

Through this engagement, we shall contribute to solving both the temporary problems of emotional trauma caused the epidemic as well as longstanding problem of having 12.5 % of global population who are Africans contributing only about 1% of global research output. We look forward to also providing 6 measurable benefits for Chinese professors and participants through delivery of 7 well-designed contents. The content of this edition shall be delivered by a highly experienced polymathic professor, Marie Harder, who had her PhD in Physics, now does teaching and research in Asia and Europe using social sciences methodologies in the field of environmental management hosted at Fudan University's Department of Environmental Science and Engineering.

It is necessary to note that African students who graduate from Chinese universities may play key roles in repositioning the continent of Africa and now is the time to act. The organizers of this event have something for every African in China on a long-term basis including provision of funding for those who have business ideas and would like to set up and run their businesses at Shanghai Free Trade Zone area where Ants Plan is located. There is an ecosystem of entrepreneurs who support and serve one another's survival and growth needs. There is also a planned provision of three-months engagement in Entrepreneurship and Innovative Strategies in the field of Modern Agriculture. This shall be for selected intelligent African young people. We also have arrangement for engagement with government officials from different African countries in the field of Modern Agriculture and related fields. There are more value-added community engagement efforts which we shall keep executing for the purpose of #ThrivingTogether. Finally, we have ongoing relationships with a number of Chinese universities and

we have already facilitated the set-up of mutually beneficial linkages between them and African Universities. This has already given rise to 16 PhD scholarships for Africans from different countries.

2. Value Expected from Engagement

a. When a professor says “I need high quality candidates to take up scholarship positions in my research group”, a most popular direct meaning is “I need candidates who have published at least one high impact research article or have shown evidence of ability in academic publishing”. With stimulated academic writing interest and potential acquisition of capacity, there shall be at least 80 % enhancement of student's chances of securing postgraduate programs with possible scholarships.

b. For those who are interested in getting jobs after graduation, there is at least 50 % increase in possibility of getting jobs in several fields that use academic output as a parameter for suitability rating. For entrepreneurs, academic rigour will contribute to enhancement details management and systematic thinking which are major success factors in entrepreneurship. We also have a package for funding entrepreneurs.

c. Students who are nearing a point of depression or are already depressed as a result of the lockdown may be brought back to strength.

d. PhD students who are experienced in academic writing will deepen their skills and have opportunity to participate in meaningful community engagement. They may mentor undergraduate/Master degree students to help them appreciate academic publishing.

e. In the long run, there shall hopefully be measurable increase in research outputs of African origin. Africa is 12.5 % of global population but contributes just about 1% of global research output.

f. Increased respect for the African continent and African students based on our clear intentional contribution to Chinese professor’s global rating based on our outputs.

3. Statement of the Problem

Alongside about 18% of global population who are Chinese and other foreigners who live in China, African students have been trapped indoors for weeks because of the novel corona virus outbreak. Some mature students are already trained to engage in meaningful tasks on their own and may be less prone to emotional imbalances during this period. However, it may not be same for many undergraduates and Master degree students who have only known strictly regimented lifestyles based on normal school timetable. Many community leaders of them have opened up saying that they feel that they may be nearing depression or are already depressed. This is exacerbated by worries constantly expressed over the phone by their family and friends back home.

The government of China has shown great capacity to contain the virus and has adopted several strict measures one of which involves an extended closure of schools and pause of normal academic activities. The force with which China is pushing back against the virus and the effort made at getting education back on track through online engagement, as announced by China’s Ministry of Education, are measurable progress in Chinese Education and Health sectors. Countries and organizations around the world have shown their support for China through various means. Our outbreak response series (ORS) is one of those support schemes customized for African students in China by Africans.

It is a joyous thing to observe that although China is still on the list of developing countries, it is no longer a conventional one which is usually characterized by low scores on almost every developmental indicator. We can only imagine what the situation would have been if that were still the case. We, Africans, must work towards being change agents in our various countries; agents who make necessary sacrifices aimed at positive alteration of the figures that have perpetuated our countries on the list of developing countries.

Can we solve the current problem while creating longer term value for our community?

4. Ideation for Solution

An editorial published on March 22, 2018 by Elsevier Company, member of RELX Group established in 1880 and reputed as the world's biggest academic publisher as at 2019 stated that "despite comprising 12.5 percent of the world's population, Africa still accounts for less than 1 percent of global research output". Brothers and sisters, does it sound good and should we leave it that way? Some people have already produced pages of arguments about veracity of that statement. Should we also choose to produce more pages of arguments about the statement, it will continue to be held as true just as several other negative stereotypes with which Africa has been branded. Brothers and sisters, we are young and we have all that it takes to change anything we choose to change if we put aside our differences and only choose to be humans; humans who are linked by a collective desire to survive, NOW, and leave a better world for our FUTURE generations whom we must trust to perpetuate our species.

It is often very easy for people with evil intentions (PWEI) to join hands in pursuit of their evil projects but people with good intentions (PWGI) are often known to be picked one after another and immobilized by PWEI while they, PWGI, are busy pursuing their individual successes privately. Our brother Kobe Bryant who is widely said to be one of the greatest and most admired basketball players of all time understood this concept and said in one of his speeches: "you can do phenomenal things individually, but they'll never reach their full potential unless you do it collectively. You have to figure out how to do that". His helicopter crashed leading to his death on January 26, 2020 at the age of 41 but this concept is not dead. May his soul rest in peace.

5. Proactive Solution

In light of this, we are calling on all African students in China to join hands; let's do this together! China already has significant influence on global issues and this is more likely to expand than diminish. We, Africans, in China have a role in repositioning our continent to be part of global decision makers instead of being stuck at the base as instruction receivers. We can go for this by supporting ourselves with all we have at our disposal. One of many strategies currently at our disposal is a series of webinars themed "ENGAGING AFRICAN STUDENTS IN CHINA (EASC)". A content of EASC that is suitable for solving the current problem as stated above is the series on "SCIENCE AND ART OF ACADEMIC PUBLISHING (SAAP)". The idea is to teach students the science and art of academic publication which not only gets us busy working as community but also has capacity to directly contribute to our future career in a measurable way. This is especially beneficial to those who are current postgraduate students, undergraduate students who hope to seek scholarship for postgraduate work or people who hope to become academics. It is useful irrespective of field of research or level of work.

In collaboration with our partners, there are other arrangements which have been put in place for non-students. For example, Ants Plan and Next Level Educational Foundation International shall be bringing us opportunities for Africans who have business ideas which they would like to start in China especially for people who graduate from Chinese universities. A top rule is that such persons must be willing to site their business(es) at the Ants Base in Shanghai Free Trade Zone where there is already a thriving ecosystem of entrepreneurs who support one another's growth. This session of SAAP will hold on **March 4, 2020 from 7 - 9.00 pm on zoom conferencing platform** <https://zoom.com.cn/j/375053527>

6. Content

- i. How to identify research gap from literature and turn it into a research question.
- ii. How to think about suitable journals where there is ongoing conversation around the identified research question
- iii. Choosing suitable method to answer the research question depending on available methods in the research field.

- iv. Organizing and communicating the outcomes (results).
- v. Discussing significance of results and how it integrates into the bigger picture of ongoing discussion in the research field.
- vi. Making succinct conclusion based on results.
- vii. The peer review process in academic publishing.

7. Resource Person

The content of this session shall be delivered by a highly experienced and polymathic professor, Marie Harder, who had her PhD in Physics, now does teaching and research in Asia and Europe using social sciences methodologies in the field of environmental management hosted at Fudan University's Department of Environmental Science and Engineering. She will present it in a most simple way that will appeal to the most inexperienced in academic publishing while deepening skills and opening up opportunities for experienced PhD students and academics in the African Community. They are able to support undergraduates and master degree students who are encouraged to render themselves to early involvement in creating solutions to the longstanding challenge of poor academic output from Africa.

Professor Marie Harder understands us and has evidenced her love for Africa by currently hosting eight (8) African PhD students from 3 African countries. Future sessions shall be delivered by Africans who are experienced in this field. Please send an email to president@nidoeastchina.org or vp@nidoeastchina.org if you would want to be a resource person for future engagements. We are also open to accepting other ideas beyond what is currently expressed here. Reach out and let us know so that together we could continue building a community that cares for one another and #ThrivesTogether.

8. Organizers

Nigerians in Diaspora Organization, East China

The Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NiDO) East China Chapter is an arm of a global Nigerian Diaspora network. NiDO East China is a recognized cultural organization in line with the relevant laws of the People's Republic of China. Our primary objective is to create a platform that stimulates and supports cultural, business, technology and other positive relations between Nigeria and China and by extension improving the image of Africa in China and beyond.

Next Level Educational Foundation International

Next Level Educational Foundation International 启望国际教育基金 (NEF Int'l) is a global organization with board members from China, Nigeria, Canada and the United States of America with a mission to facilitate removal of educational barriers towards optimization of human potentials at Individual, Institutional, Community and Country levels (I²C²).

Hujiang Educational Technologies Company Limited

Hujiang Education Technology (Shanghai) Corp. Ltd. is one of China's largest web-based digital education platforms; a multibillion-dollar organization which provides users with products and services of convenience and excellence. It is actively using 16 technologies for its website and has over 170 million registered users offering 2,000 courses targeting primary, secondary and tertiary education segments, as well as professional education.

Ants Plan

Ants Plan was established in response to the China's national call for entrepreneurship and innovation. Consequently, it has become a highly recognized base for entrepreneurship incubation and consultancy; receiving thousands of government and corporate visits as well as hundreds of them coming from outside China. The Ant Plan includes three major sections: Ants Nesting (Solving housing needs for

entrepreneurs), Ants Fund (Solving initial capital needs for Educational Entrepreneurs), and Ant Education (Pushing forward the frontiers of internet education).

Supporters

Consulate-General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Shanghai
Yangpu District Government's Lifelong Learning Office
Shanghai Mingde Learning Organization Institute

Elijah Odii

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light background. The signature consists of a large, stylized 'O' followed by 'dii' and 'Elijah' written in a cursive script.

President
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