



The University of
Nottingham

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UKFIET



The Open
University

Symposium

Higher Education, Professional Learning and African Development: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives

Tuesday 19th June 2012, 10am – 4pm
The Open University, Milton Keynes

For all of its long history, higher education has had the education of professionals as a core mission. This mission is clearly of great relevance when thinking about higher education's role in development. Yet, we are at a point where professional education in much of the world remains weak. Although there have been an increasing number of initiatives to address this issue, they have tended to sit within disciplinary-professional silos with educators in the professions being embedded in disciplinary homes and linking outwards to specific professional bodies. Even where there is a growth of multi-disciplinary teams, such as within health, there is still relatively little cross-professional co-learning and limited interactions with Schools of Education. Equally, there is a danger that new initiatives export models of professional education from developed country contexts without cognisance of either resource constraints or cultural issues.

You are invited to a one day UKFIET symposium, hosted by the Open University in partnership with the University of Nottingham, which will look at professional learning in universities. The day will explore the possibilities for cross-disciplinary learning regarding the successes and challenges of working on professional education in Africa and the implications this has for wider thinking about capacity development and African development more broadly. Among the questions it will consider are:

- What are the ultimate goals of professional education and how do these vary across countries, professions and time?
- What models of learning can be found in various professional education approaches, and what can be learnt from these across professional boundaries?
- How do different professions build an appropriate balance between initial and continuing professional education?
- How do professional education and professionals work between universal constructs of professional knowledge and specific cultural funds of knowledge?
- How does professional education in Africa get shaped by national and international debates regarding the appropriate skills mix between professionals and para-professionals?



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The event will be organised in a way that maximises dialogue and which minimises formal presentations. Nonetheless, a set of short introductory comments will be made by researchers working on matters of professional education in Africa for a range of professions including education, pharmacy and health.

This event will be of interest not just to the academic community, but also to other stakeholders working in professional education in Africa.

Freda Wolfenden
Open University

Simon McGrath
University of Nottingham

On behalf of UKFIET Executive

To book your place please email CREET-Enquiries@open.ac.uk by 1st June 2012