



REPUBLIC OF BENIN

UNIVERSITY OF ABOMEY-CALAVI (UAC)

*EXPERIMENTAL PROJECT CTA/WUR 'IMPLEMENTATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE
POLITICAL PROCESS ACP/ARD: IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY OF THE POPULATIONS'*

**AUDIT WORKSHOP REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FOOD
SECURITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN BENIN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
ABOMEY-CALAVI**

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ATC: Agricultural Technical Cooperation

DNSA: Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences

DESAC: Department of Economics and Socio-Anthropology and Communication

EPAC: Ecole Polytechnique of Abomey-Calavi

FAST: School of Engineering

FINSA: International Training in Nutrition and Food Security

FAS: Faculty of Agricultural Science

GBBR: Genetics, Biotechnologies and Biological Resources

GTA: Food Technology Engineering

UAC: University of Abomey-Calavi

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Hunger is a problem that increasingly affects populations around the world: there are approximately 858 million undernourished people and approximately 39% are in Africa. Agriculture plays an important role in Africa in ensuring food self-sufficiency and eliminating hunger. In this fight against hunger and food insecurity, several programmes have been developed, which include the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). This programme has four pillars which are: (1) land and water management, (2) market access, (3) food supply, and (4) agricultural research. In the implementation of the fourth pillar, several activities have been scheduled of which 'Implementation of higher education in the political processes ACP ARD: Improving food security of populations' has been initiated. This project aims to evaluate the skills of higher education establishments in CAADP processes. This evaluation will be completed in three phases: a rapid assessment of the policy framework of the universities; an audit of the actions implemented by the universities towards improving food security; and mapping the key players and their roles in the implementation of development programmes for food security. This report showcases the results of the audit on the implementation of food security in the teachings of the Faculty of Agricultural Science (FAS), of the Ecole Polytechnique of Abomey-Calavi (EPAC) and of the School of Engineering (FAST) of the University of Abomey-Calavi.

1.2 Objective

This workshop aims to evaluate the current situation and the future ambitions of the University of Abomey-Calavi in the implementation of food security in its teaching.

2. Workshop outline

The workshop started at 09h00. Eleven lecturers and 11 students were present at this workshop, all from the FAS, of the FAST and of EPAC. The FAS, EPAC and FAST represented 65%, 17% and 8% of participants respectively (see list of participants in Annex 1).

The participants were welcomed by the national delegate and afterwards, the expert from CTA and the FAS vice president. This was followed by an opening speech by the vice president of the Faculty of Agricultural Science. The vice president firstly reiterated the context of the workshop. Then, he emphasised the importance of food security in the current environment and of the need for its implementation in higher education and on the necessary multi-disciplinarity approach involved in this concept. Lastly, he invited all participants to be honest in their various interventions during the workshop.

Following this, the CTA expert introduced the scope and minutes of work. In his speech, he briefly presented the main results of the September 2012 workshop in Wageningen, the awaited results of the current audit and the AIFSHE tool.

3. AIFSHE tool

3.1 Methodology

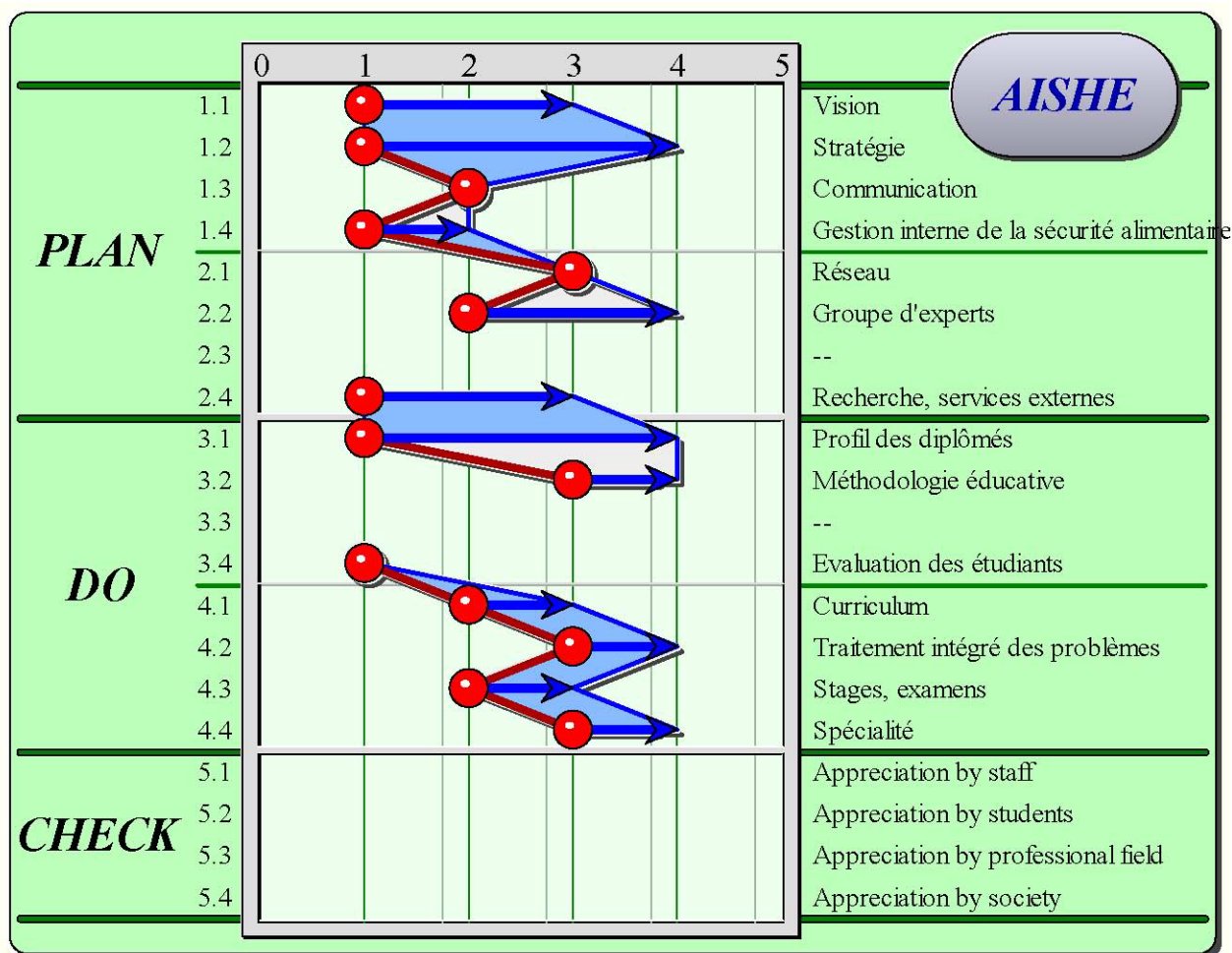
Participants individually filled in the AIFSHE rating. Discussions were then held in plenary in order to achieve consensus in the areas of common interest 1 and 2 of the tool under the supervision of the CTA expert. Afterwards, the group was divided into two. One of the groups dealt with field of interest 3 (educational objectives) and the other field of interest 4 (educational content). At the end of the discussions in sub-groups, a concluding plenary was held to obtain the consensus of all participants. Lastly, the main results of the audit were presented in graphic form using the AIFSHE tool, to bring all participants to the same level of understanding.

3.2 Results

The following pages show the results of the use of the AIFSHE tool.

AIFSHE Report

University: Abomey-Calavi Etablissement EPAC-FAST-FSA
 Auditor: BELLO Olivier
 National Coordinator: ACHIGANDAKO Enoch
 Number of participants: 23
 Secretary: YETONGNON Imelda
 Evaluation date: 23/04/2013
 Last evaluation date:
 Desired situation date: 3 years



The five stages of AIFSHE are:

- Stage 1: Activity oriented
- Stage 2: Process oriented
- Stage 3: System oriented
- Stage 4: Chain oriented
- Stage 5: Society oriented

=== *PLAN* ===

1. Vision and Strategy

Criterion: 1.1. Vision

Present Situation: Stage 1

The participants recognised the existence of an implied vision through activities carried out in various departments of the three faculties. This is reflected by the existence of several projects, workshops, meetings, and guidance documents among the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences (FAS) as well as the Ecole Polytechnique of Abomey-Calavi (EPAC) and of the School of Engineering (FAST). In addition to these respective faculties, expertise occurs in Human Nutrition and Food Security, the Food Technology Engineering (GTA) and the Genetics, Biotechnologies and Biological Resources (GBBR) departments. The participants unanimously concluded that no document explicitly mentions food security.

Desired situation: Stage 3

With the existence of an implied vision within the organisation, the participants have committed themselves to clarifying this vision. In addition, it is possible that there is a shared vision among the three faculties. The aim, focused on Stage 3, is to consolidate the application of existing texts through meetings between the lecturers and the administrative staff and to explore the possibility of including students in the decision-making process.

Criterion: 1.2. Policy

Present situation: Stage 1

In terms of food security, the vision is explicit but the strategies of implementing this vision do not exist which means the current situation does not match Stage 1. For example, the creation of several departments of the FAS consist of indirect strategies. The decision to implement these strategies is the responsibility of the management only, and is highly dependent of financial resources. In order to move forward, these strategies need to be clearly defined regardless of the funds which determine their implementation.

Desired situation: Stage 4

Stage 4 could be possible, but for this to happen the strategy needs to be clarified and consultations between lecturers, administrative staff, professionals and students must occur. The question is to know what structures are appropriate. Many conditions are ready in order to achieve this requirement.

Criterion: 1.3. Communication

Present situation: Stage 2

Students in specific departments acquire food security knowledge most often outside of the courses they attend. However, according to the lecturers, whatever the chosen speciality (animal or plant production), the problem of food security is being addressed. This raises a communication problem between the learners and the lecturers. As the definition of the concept of 'food security' differs from one specialty to another. However, in terms of the faculty, these questions are recurring in the sense that the food security aspect is indirectly addressed in the courses given. Furthermore, we note the existence of a standard Master's among the three entities FAS-EPAC-FAST.

Desired situation: Stage 2

On the one hand, the topic of food security comes out regularly at FAS, but at FAST it is much less the case; the learners here do not link food security with what they study. In the strategy we therefore can define a communication plan so that people are better informed on food security. If the three entities are involved, we can make it to Stage 2 and consolidate this level within FAST, which finds itself at a lower level. In order to consolidate this level, we must set up an action plan.

Criterion: 1.4. Internal management of food security

Present situation: Stage 1

There is the possibility to create internal structures. At the three faculties, in terms of attempts and ideas to improve the situation, there are structures in place. In a nutshell, we realise that we are still at an experimental stage. The current situation is therefore at Stage 1 and depends on the ability of the faculties to meet the expectations of the students.

Desired situation: Stage 2

From the moment restaurants are available to the students we would be able to move into Stage 2. There must be an impact in terms of volume and the structures must be in place.

2. Expertise

Criterion: 2.1. Network

Present situation: Stage 3

Stage 1 has been met because lecturers maintain contact with individuals outside of the University. At Stage 2, the first and second requirements are met because contracts with partners and individuals of the professional world exist. The departments of the NSA and PA of the FAS are proof of Stage 3. Furthermore, the department of ESAC of the FAS organises many international workshops on food security. They however do not insert the elements of these in the courses offered. As for the departments, they attempt to inject some results in the courses but this comes with limitations, meaning that these points are not systematic. We are working towards the second requirement of Stage 3, which requires consolidation.

Desired situation: Stage 3

There is no further aim to reach a higher level because the feedback gained from the network should be consolidated, in order to apply the expertise of the network towards teaching and networking.

Criterion: 2.2. Expert group

Present situation: Stage 2

Stage 1 is taken as starting point as long as the expertise of FAST, FAS and EPAC are solicited. Solicitors often go through laboratory managers and faculty managers in order to assess the efficiency of the laboratories and to identify individuals who meet the skills they are looking for. Lecturers play the expert role. Through this structure, the lecturers identify expertise to solve problems. In order to discriminate between all various offers of the market, they must work towards a 'certification system' of the expertise, so that they can assess whether an offer is likely to match the professional requirements for the issues to be solved. There are human resources which can be defined as a group of experts. We are therefore currently in Stage 2 because presently, when someone requires an expert, we can look for people in the faculties to do the work.

Desired situation: Stage 4

To be in Stage 3, there are several challenges as follows:

- gather experts in one centre;
- link up the people of this centre through clearly-defined requirements;
- equally split the work in order to avoid expropriation of all tasks by one single person and to avoid organisational and administrative issues.

Stage 4 requires visibility of the establishment and time to think about the students. The second criterion could include the creation of a centre to practically implement research. Stage 4 is the ambition. If the "bottleneck" is removed, one can go a long way with this centre. Everyone in Benin is aware that we lack the statistics and specialised training in food security to showcase the centre and to make it indispensable in Benin and even in the sub-region. In a nutshell, all the issues raised at Stage 3 must be faced. Stage 4 would boost expertise at the centre. The aim was that building this structure would bring people to the faculties. There isn't a forum where we can go to when we want to talk about a strategy and discuss other topics related to food

security. It is an opportunity to value skills within the institutions. The role of the institution consists of training and the creation of a database (the institution can for instance take markets and based on human resources gather a group of experts). The idea behind the centre is to serve as a one-stop shop for expertise on food security.

Criterion: 2.3.

This criterion will be removed from the instrument, as it has no direct relationship with the theme of food security (part of the fine tuning of AIFSHE within this pilot phase).

Criterion: 2.4. Research, external services

Present situation: Stage 1

The NSA department of the FSA is a model of excellence for Stage 4. ESAC accompanies this movement. There are several international research projects whereby ESAC and NSA are in sync. Stages 2 and 3 have not yet been achieved, although the criteria for Stage 4 are more highly developed. Despite this, the fact that the requirements for Stage 2 and 3 have not been met keeps the organisation in Stage 1. Furthermore, in terms of food in relation to the pastoral field, the presence of external services has been noted to see up to which level the concept of food security is implemented. In a nutshell, there is a valorisation of the second criteria in Stage 2; however it has not materialised.

Desired situation: Stage 3

If Stage 1 is the present situation, the wish is to reach Stage 3.

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=== *DO* ===

3. Educational objectives

Criterion: 3.1. Profile of the graduates

Present situation: Stage 1

The requirements of Stage 2 have not been met; however conditions are favourable to reach higher levels.

Desired situation: Stage 4

We aspire to go reach Stage 4 because the conditions are favourable with the BMD. Furthermore, professionals participate in the support of the students, in particular during internships. Professionals offer teaching which is an integral part of the curriculum and they help to evaluate students and grade their work.

Criterion: 3.2. Educational methodology

Present situation: Stage 3

Stages 1 and 2 have been accomplished. The present situation is Stage 3, as some personal tasks have been given to students, referred to as TPE. During the TPE, students conduct presentations, which are then released to other students and lecturers. These presentation sessions are a way to exchange information between students and lecturers.

Desired situation: Stage 4

We aspire to reach Stage 4. The idea of reaching Stage 5 can be considered when the difficulties related to interdepartmental mobility are resolved.

Criterion: 3.3.

This criterion will be removed from the instrument, as it has no direct relationship with the theme of food security (part of the fine tuning of AIFSHE within this pilot phase).

Criterion: 3.4. Student examination

Present situation: Stage 1

Some programme evaluations take aspects of food security into account.

Desired situation: Stage 1

We are not aiming to reach Stage 2 because of specific issues that arise. It is not seen as relevant to evaluate the four aspects of food security during the courses because they are specialised on specific fields.

4. Educational content

Criterion: 4.1. Curriculum

Present situation: Stage 1

Phase 1 is been achieved because there are courses linked to food security. Phase 2 has not been achieved because there is no module related to food security. It has therefore been chosen to be phase 2 with the first point to be reinforced because we do not yet have a module on its own about food security.

Desired situation: Stage 3

For the next three years, Stage 3 is the target, and in the long run, Stage 4.

Criterion: 4.2. Integrated problem handling

Present situation: Stage 3

Stage 1 is achieved through training obtained with the help of lecturers, who can support practical aspects of the courses provided. Stage 2 is achieved because courses are inter-related. Stage 3 is achieved because in the first year of training, cross-curricular courses are offered to students. This gives students the opportunity to become specialised in other areas. Nevertheless, this stage needs to be consolidated.

Desired situation: Stage 4

We aim for Stage 4 for better performance. For example, for the chain management, a specification table is required in terms of the running order of the courses.

Criterion: 4.3. Training, exams

Present situation: Stage 2

Stage 1 is achieved. Stage 2 is the current situation given that training related to food security has been organised for the students. However, there is a necessity to strengthen this stage because the students do not realise that their work is linked to food security.

Desired situation: Stage 3

Stage 3 is the aim because the theme of food security is not always one of the main activities raised in the training sessions or practical work. Food security is not pointed out in the examination regulations and should systematically be implemented in the curriculum.

Criterion: 4.4. Speciality

Present situation: Stage 3

Thanks to the BMD system in place in several institutions, the students have the option to choose an optional module linked to food security in another institution, thus achieving Stage 1 within the organisation. With the existence of the Master's on nutrition and food security at FAST and at the International Training in Nutrition and Food Security (FINSa) at the FAS, students receive classes on optional modules related mainly to food security. This training offers a special certificate to students and enables them to become specialised in food security. Moreover, there is a need to consolidate Stage 2 at EPAC through the possibility of the issuance of a special certificate or an annotation on the diploma of the students.

Desired situation: Stage 4

The aim is Stage 4 because the inter-disciplinarity dedicated mainly to food security is not yet effective and can be achievable.

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=== CHECK === *This category does not fall into the scope of the pilot.*

The audit report carried out at the University of Abomey-Calavi indicates that efforts to implement food security are being done. Nevertheless, there are enormous challenges to be overcome in particular with the combined endeavours of the three faculties in relation to the different requirements which constitute each area of interest of the AIFSHE tool.

Annex 1 List of participants

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