Internationalization of Higher Education System in Ethiopia: A Review of Education Policies and Strategies

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Abstract: Internationalization has become a new phenomenon and reality impacting on higher education systems across the globe presenting varied challenges, opportunities and risks. It has also become a matter of immense policy significance to governments and institutions with the increasing benefits associated with integrating into the global network of knowledge and ensuring global competitiveness. The writing of this article is motivated by the conviction that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) operate in line with institutional, political, economic and cultural context of the nations in which they exist. The level of support extended and policy directions set by national governments influence the nature, motivation and strength of the internationalization ventures by HEIs where objectives and rationales need to be integrated with national policies and strategies. The review article assessed the policy provisions for internationalizing the higher education system in Ethiopia. It involved a critical review of Education Sector Development Programs and national development plans in the post 1991 period. It discovered that comprehensive and organized policy framework (except for scanty provisions) that defines aims, rationales and objectives of internationalization is lacking. This has left the universities to operate in a vacuum and less planned and unorganized manner. The study suggests that most of the missions assigned to the universities, such as ensuring quality in education and research, and preparing graduates for the international market, needs to be accompanied with policy commitment towards internationalization. In dealing with such a policy, government should follow an integrated approach combining all the important elements and dimensions of internationalization.

Keywords: higher education, internationalization, policy and strategy, Ethiopia

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education is undergoing substantial change in the era of globalization. Globalization and increasing inter-connectedness is driving higher learning institutions to incorporate global and intercultural dimensions to their educational and research activities (Stromquist 2007). In the 1990s, internationalization became an issue of academic discussion and policy (Teichler 2004). It was pronounced in encouraging universities toward international participation in research, teaching and services to making them open to new ideas and international understandings (Mauch and Spaulding 1992). The changing global environment has come with new demands, necessitating the increased performance of activities cooperatively and competitively putting the internationalization of higher education intuitions high on the strategic agenda (Horta 2009). For example, there has been increasing orientation toward academic mobility involving students, research, academic programs, and providers moving across borders and market-driven by delivery of education. This has also been accompanied by expansion of academic networks and collaborations on mutually beneficial frameworks of agreements. Institutions are trying to systematically respond to the requirements and challenges of the globalization of societies, economy and the labor markets (Knight 2005, 5). Therefore internationalization is marked as a matter of necessity than choice by contemporary Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Nonetheless, the institutions operate in line with institutional, political, economic and cultural context of the nations in which they exist. The level of support extended and the policy direction set by national governments might influence the nature, motivation and strength of the internationalization venture.

RATIONALE OF REVIEWING INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICY AND STRATEGY

This review article analyzed the supportive role that could be played by national educational policies and strategies towards internationalization of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ethiopia. This involves a critical review of, mainly, educational policies and strategies, Education Sector Development Programs (ESDPs), higher education proclamations, the recently launched education sector development program (2018-30), and national development plans. The review is situated in a national context where the higher education

sector is expanding aggressively over the past two decades and where efforts are well underway by individual universities towards increased international engagement at various levels and with high degree of disparity. However, not so much is known about the policies and strategies set by the national government towards internationalizing higher education in Ethiopia.

The existence of supportive policy environment by way of setting guiding principles could help the institution to define aims, establish rationales, and set objectives, anticipating the intended outcomes of internationalization. A general policy framework could also create conducive operative legal, institutional, financial and structural environment. In this regard looking in to national and sectoral level policies and strategies might be an interesting endeavor to assess as to whether guiding principles are set to define the purposes, outcomes, perspective and values attached to internationalizing higher education and the accompanied responsibilities of public universities in Ethiopia. Knight (2005), in line with this opines that all the policies that are promulgated in relation to purpose, funding, curriculum, teaching, research, etc. by the education sector or national level bodies might have direct impact on all kinds of higher education institutions with regard to their efforts towards internationalization.

The Ethiopian government proclaimed five consecutive Educational Sector Development programs (ESDP I-V) and other national development plans having provisions pertaining to the higher education system. Nonetheless, research did not establish what and the degree to which existing educational frameworks have provided for internationalization of higher education in Ethiopia. It can be said that it was less clear or just unclear about the overall policy direction to guide the activities of internationalization and the level of support provided from the government to public universities. Moreover, one has to ponder as to what exactly is required of the institutions as far as internationalization is concerned and whether the necessary legal, institutional, financial inputs are being put in place. The review article intends to fill the gap in literature on the national policy context on the internationalization of the higher education system in Ethiopia.

This paper has thus reviewed and made a thorough analysis of relevant policy documents, directives and policy statements. Accordingly, it attempted to answer the following questions:
1.   What are the policies and strategies put in place to promote internationalization of higher education in Ethiopia?

2.	How do exiting internationalization policies and strategies address the core dimensions of teaching, research and service in higher education sub-system of Ethiopia?

RESEARCH METHOD

The article assessed the national policy context in internationalizing the higher education system in Ethiopia which requires an in-depth and critical evaluation of education policy and strategy documents with specific emphasis on provision on the higher education system. It employed qualitative research approach aiming at examining the nature of national education policies and strategies in line with internationalizing the higher education system. It looks deep in to policy provision and examines their implications on the missions, functions and responsibilities of public higher education institutions.

Data will be obtained from analysis of the policy documents in relation to incorporating international dimension in the teaching, research and service functions of public universities. There are several policies, programs, and strategies set out for almost three decades now in the education sector having specific provisions about the management of the higher education sub-system. Education policies and strategies of post 1991 Ethiopia have been emphasized due to the fundamental ideological and structural reform measures took place in the economic and political dimensions of the state with significant departure from the socialist state system in the past.

The 1994 Education and Training Policy and Strategy of Ethiopia, the ensuing successive ESDPs from I to V, the recently launched Ethiopian Education Sector Development Program (2018-30), the 2009 Higher Education Proclamation, and national development strategy documents have been assessed to synthesize evidences on the national policy environment under which internationalization is conceived.

By way of analysis it tries to glean the essence of the contents of the policy and strategy documents in terms of their intentions, motives and rationales of internationalizing the higher education institutions in the country. The analysis starts with reviewing the documents highlighting specifically on provisions on internationalization to understand the rationales, goals, intentions and expected outcomes. This helped understand the policy from the normative point of view, which could be a crucial component in setting directions for actions. The information extracted from the policy documents was cross-examined

with well established dimensions and elements of internationalization in the existing body of literature.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Meaning of internationalization in education

The most familiar and comprehensive definition of the term internationalization is the one suggested by Knight (2008, 7) referring to it as "the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution". Van Damme (2001, 417) emphasizing on cross boarder movement of education considered the term to refer to "the activities of higher education institutions often supported or framed by multilateral agreements or programs, to expand the reach over national boarder".

Altbach (2002, 29) briefly defines internationalization as "the specific policies and initiatives of individual academic institutions, systems or countries that deal with global trends." This definition is considered as a more explanatory operational definition in the context of this research. A broader definition, also relevant to this article, that transcends institutional level emphasis is, the one proposed by Van der Wende (1997) who expressed it as "any systematic effort aimed at making higher education responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalization of societies, economy and labor markets" (cited in Knight 2008, 6). Such an explanation transcends institutional level emphasis and underscores the development of higher education institution in line with international standards being more open and responsive to the global environment (Zha 2003). Both definitions imply a systematic and strategic approach to guide the internationalization activities of universities at a national level though there is no simple and all encompassing definition of the term.

Dimensions and elements of internationalization

The importance of national level policies and strategies of internationalization cannot be overstated as universities do usually grow up institutionally within a national political framework in line with national educational systems, regulations and procedures designed to meet the needs of domestic socio-economic and cultural priorities (Van Damme 2001). System wide designing of policies and strategies where individual institutions will operate and be regulated in a nationally defined framework other than their own planning and

implementation has become a major policy trend towards higher education institutions during the last few decades (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley 2009). National level policies could be instrumental to encourage higher education institutions to be more organized and strategic in dealing with international matters setting the frames for international communication, cooperation, mobility, research and education (Teichler 2004).

Policy documents towards internationalizing higher education systems present different set of justifications and arguments mostly summarized into social, economic, cultural and educational dimensions, of which some are embedded in the needs of society and others in the education system and the economy. The components combined together constitute a set of overlapping rationales for the process and activities of internationalization" (Knight and De Wit 1995). Hence, internationalization is based on a mixture of various rationales and dimensions while the changes and continuities of approaches and actions are influenced by the interplay of various national and international forces and actors (Zha 2003).

The economic rationale posits that internationalization will have a positive effect on technological development and thus on economic growth. Moreover, income generating activities associated with cross-border movement of educational programs is emphasized by this rationale. Exporting education and training and attracting international students to domestic universities has become greater area of interest to promote economic benefits through higher education (Knight 2005; Knight and De Wit 1995). More related to the economic rationale is also the argument with regard to the labor market in line with enhancing the human resource capacity for competitiveness in the global employment market. (Knight 2005)

Alladin characterized education as "the fourth dimension of foreign policy to improve the image of a country, to cast its policies in a favorable light" (quoted in Knight and De Wit 1995, 11). Scholarship programs for foreign students are purposely designed by some governments as a long term investment to promote stronger relations with other nations (Mauch and Spaulding 1992). In general, internationalization can be used as an instrument to promote strategic alliance for academic, political, social or cultural purposes (Knight 2005).

Very specific importance to the context of developing countries is the instrumentality of internationalization to nation and institution building. The contribution of educated and skilled man power (citizens) together with innovative capacity cannot be overstated to the nation building agenda of developing countries. They definitely face dearth of physical and human infrastructure and financial resources to educate and equip their citizens with the requisite abilities and skills particularly at higher education level. In light of these circumstances, international development and technical assistance in education and research embraced vital aspects of internationalization for these countries. Global engagements and partnerships, accordingly, play a significant role in enhancing human, material and financial capacity of universities in developing nations (Ibid).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Education policies and the higher education subsystem in the post-1991 Ethiopia

Ethiopia issued a series of policies and programs for the education sector in the post 1991 period constituting various elements and emphasis but with similar set of goals directed towards enhancing the capacity of the education sector. The Education and Training Policy (ETP) was the first of such policies served in guiding the education sector of the country for a span of three years from 1994-1997, which later on was followed by the first five-year Education Sector Development Program (ESDP-I) to function from 1997/98 – 2001/02.

Accordingly, ESDP-II (2002/03-2004/05), ESDP-III (2005/06-2009/10), ESDP IV (2010/11-2014/15) and ESDP- V (2015/16-2019/20) were issued successively. Besides the ATP and ESDPs, other comprehensive national development plan documents such as the GTP-I and II did also provide policy directions to the education sector. Recently, the government also issued the Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap to serve for a period of 12 years from 2018-2030 aiming at aligning the education sector with the national development goals.

The core objectives of the higher education system, as stipulated by many of the policy documents, is to produce competent and problem-solving professionals to meet the qualitative and quantitative demand for highly qualified, motivated and innovative human resource in response to the socio-economic development needs of the country. The higher education sector is recognized as the most important sector in

the institutional capacity development efforts of the country by producing appropriate graduates with the required knowledge, skill, and attitude in various fields of study. HEIs are also assigned, through their research, with the responsibilities to promote freedom, rational exchange of views and opinions, and democratic and multicultural views (Ethiopia, Ministry of Education 1994).

Expansion and consolidation of universities has been given greater attention by most of the policy documents duly acknowledging the very lower coverage of higher education compared to the highly increasing demand for training and employment opportunities. HEIs, according to the ETP, "are very few in number, restricted to very few regions, and their research capacity is low" (Ibid, 3).

Besides, the policies provided the need to expand the intake and enrollment capacity of universities and open more academic programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Hand in hand with expansion, ways and mechanisms of ensuring quality in education and research of the HEIs are put forward by the policy documents (Ministry of Education 2002).

Although the policy documents laid different emphasis at different times, they commonly underlined on improving the discovery and innovation capacity of universities to upgrade the volume, capacity, quality and relevance of research in universities. Alleviating hindrances such as low available finance and small supply of capable researchers have been highlighted by the policy documents. Expanding postgraduate programs is proposed as one of the solutions to breed competent researchers in various fields of study. Building research and development system in each university is put forward as a policy direction to encourage technology transfer and increase the impact of scientific researches in addressing national development goals (Ministry of Education 2015, 2010, 2005 and 2002). From the governance perspective, building administrative and managerial capacity is believed to enhance universities' ability to deliver good quality education, for knowledge creation and transfer, and to widen community and consultancy services. (Ministry of Education 2010 and 2005)

Internationalization in view of national education policies and strategies
As indicated in the previous parts, the education policy and strategy documents on higher education system promoted the quantitative

expansion of universities while enhancing leadership capacity, improving research and innovation capacity, and opening more postgraduate programs, and later on instituting quality assurance mechanisms as the core policy focus areas.

The ETP and the first four ESDPs did not provide any coherent and well thought policy direction towards internationalizing the higher education system. The ESDP-II slightly mentioned the necessity of hiring expatriate staff members to alleviate scarcity of teaching staff to manage post graduate programs (Ministry of Education 2002). This has been further reiterated by ESDP- III, suggesting the same strategy as stop gap measure of tackling teaching staff scarcity. Sending academic staff to foreign universities for training in PhD and Masters Studies was proposed as a quick fix strategy to build the human resource capacity of the institutions (Ministry of Education 2005).

An explicit policy provision on the internationalization of the higher education system of Ethiopia is incorporated in the ESDP-V. It succinctly states that:

> The development of connection and collaboration between Ethiopian and international institutions will be extended so that international dialogue and exchange can advance the breadth and quality of academic programs and research institutions and enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Ethiopia, Ministry of Education 2015, 110).

This could be understood as the first vividly put and well-articulated policy initiative aimed at embedding internationalization into the teaching and research responsibilities of universities. Sharing of knowledge and technological, social and cultural experiences are mentioned as the core aims for universities to engage with other international institutions.

The institutions are provided with policy directions to initiate partnerships towards student and staff exchange and formulate joint academic and research programs. At the heart of having good quality international academic programs, according to the document, is to attract international students from the region (probably referring to the Horn of Africa). Creating a match between higher education and the local and international labor market, as stipulated in the document, also indicates the need for enhancing quality of education through international engagement in order to produce highly qualified and competent graduates that could be absorbed by the international labor market. Internationalization is proposed as a key instrument to boost

the staff research capacity and improving the quality of researches conducted at Ethiopian universities through collaboration between academics in Ethiopian universities and abroad, besides mobilizing local resources and intensive engagement with industries (Ibid).

Contextualized plans, strategies, and structures are considered as the most appropriate methods of embedding internationalization activities in to respective institutions. It is suggested that the designing of international collaboration strategies and their implementation at all universities will be conducted through their established *international liaison office*. The document provided on the establishment of a national body/unit that will be engaged in the monitoring and evaluation of internationalization efforts and the marketing of the institutions in the international arena to enable them to attract more partners in various fields of their interest (Ibid).

The Education Development Road Map, a comprehensive policy document issued to serve as the road map for the development and management of the education sector from 2018-30, raised concerns on the deteriorating quality of education in the country's higher education system. One of the remedies proposed to enhance quality in higher education is "connecting Ethiopian HEIs to world class universities and research institutions." It raised key measures for actions such as building their capacity in attracting students, staff, and research grants from overseas. It proposed internationalization of teaching and research without compromising the development needs of the country and suggested for universities to encourage staff and students mobility within Africa and beyond (Ministry of Education 2018, 55).

The *Higher Education Proclamation* No. 650/2009, which was proclaimed to create an appropriate legal framework and lay down an institutional and governance system to the ever expanding higher education system, has clearly stipulated objectives and responsibilities of the same. Bedsides the traditional functional responsibilities and aims of universities, the proclamation did not have any clear provision for internationalization. It has only generally entrusted them with a duty to establish cooperative relations with industries and other institutions in pursuit of their missions. Nonetheless, article 25 of the proclamation authorizes universities to enter agreements with institutions from abroad for joint research projects and receive funds for the same maintaining professional ethics and research standard and norms of their respective institution. Under article 53 (g), the proclamation tacitly indicated the necessity of engagement in

international affairs when it clearly designated presidents of institutions with the responsibility to ensure "perpetual connection of their institution to other international institutions" (Ibid).

Education in general and higher education in particular are incorporated as part of the national development plan documents such as GTP- I (2010/11 to 2014/15) and GTP- II (2015/16 to 2019/20). The two national plan documents are aligned with ESDP- IV and ESDP-V respectively, sharing aims, objectives, and strategies. GTP-I has no explicit provision with regard to the internationalization of higher education while GTP-II has set a general direction on the importance of formulating a framework for guiding international partnership and collaboration. It has also indicated the need for reviewing international standards to establish research universities that could focus on knowledge development and technological innovation. This shows that the plan recognized the need for national level policy and strategy to guide the internationalization efforts of higher education in Ethiopia (National Planning Commission 2015; Ethiopia, Ministry of Finance Economic Development 2010).

FROM NOW ON, WHERE TO? ANALYTICAL REVIEW
Students and the labor market
Expansion and better management of higher education has been accepted as a way of maximizing the benefits obtained from the global knowledge based economy, which is more plausible to explain the situation in developing economies with low participation in the global distribution of higher education (Agarwal 2014).

Similarly education policies and programs in the post 1991 Ethiopia attached higher value to the expansion and quality management of the higher education system as one of the key instruments to drive the country through the aspired for socio-economic development. Besides acknowledging higher education as a key driver and strategic sector to enhance institutional capacity and providing human power to the would be expanding industrial sector of the economy, it is assigned with ensuring greater quality by way of producing highly qualified graduates well enough to compete in the national and international employment market. Policy documents aspire to push employability beyond the national labor market while setting a direction for graduates to get absorbed by the international market. Preparing students for the international market, according to Mauch and Spaulding (1992), requires strong international engagement since the

presence of students from different cultures on campus improves quality of education.

Students who study on a more internationalized campus would be more exposed to international perspectives, outlooks, methods and be more ready to fulfill conditions and expectations in circumstances beyond their national border. This is because their skills and attitudes would match with the quality requirements of modern work force and exiting realities in the global market (Murphy 2007). This implies that Ethiopian universities need to actively engage in attracting international students as far as their capacity allows in order creating a diverse and multicultural educational environment.

International mobility of students for cross-border education has not been clearly highlighted by the policy documents in Ethiopia though it is one of the most acknowledged instruments to inculcate international standard in the teaching and learning process. One of the most effective mechanisms of preparing future graduates for international employment market, as Van Damme (2001) opines, is to let students study and live abroad for at least a specific period of time. Cross cultural education and scientific engagement will have a positive outcome in building cultural tolerance and international understanding within students.

Internationalization of education programs
Enhancing the breadth and quality of educational programs has been raised as one of the reasons why Ethiopian universities need to engage in international connections and collaboration as stipulated by ESDP-V. Such a policy initiative could be quite interesting from the perspective of inducing international and intercultural standards in the educational programs and curricula. Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2009) argue that so much has changed with regard to the expectations from educational programs in higher education institutions. They posit that there is a tendency to shy away from measuring inputs and what is being taught to emphasizing on learning outcomes. Curriculum has also become a crucial gateway to attract more international students by way of accommodating their diverse goals and interests. International students basically seek to study academic programs that are more relevant to their needs and the needs of their country. As a result, incorporating international elements to the curriculum would help to attract more international students and side by side helps to internationalize the host institution (Mauch and Spaulding 1992).

Infusion of disciplines with international content, formulating comparative issue oriented approach, introducing interdisciplinary, intercultural and international development studies, as suggested by Knight and De Wit (1995), may need to be considered in internationalizing educational programs in the Ethiopian higher education system.

Internationalization of research
Integrating the research function into their broader activities is one of the most important tasks of universities and this applies more to institutions in developing countries, where cultivating research capacity is critically important (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley 2009). Improving the discovery and innovation capacity of Ethiopian universities has been at stake for many of the reviewed education policies and programs. The critically low capacity for research and innovation hindered the institutions from addressing societal problems through scientific engagement, which compromises the delivery of one of their core functional responsibilities. In addition to addressing locally induced bureaucratic, financial and capacity constraints, some of the policy documents suggested internationalization and joint-research engagements with international partners as a key measure to build staff capacity for research and innovation, to get access to grants and funds, and to exchange knowledge on up-to-date research findings.

From the perspective of internationalization, Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2009, 143) argued that, "research universities worldwide sit at the top of the higher education hierarchy and are the most visible and most expensive institutions in the academic system…they bring prestige and international visibility to their host country." They presume that most of the world's top ranked universities are research intensive and are less likely to stress on teaching, serving the interests of under privileged groups or delivering specific local services. This indicates the importance of differentiating universities into those focusing on research and training especially if Ethiopian universities are supposed to quickly integrate into the global knowledge network.

In line with this, it is argued that, research universities could benefit from a differentiated academic system, where specific focus is laid on allocating them with grants and funds to expand their research and innovation capacity. Not all national universities can internationalize equally due to the global and national trend of inequality among academic institutions at different levels of experience, economic status,

and other forms of disparities. As a result, universities with long history of existence and academic tradition will have a better capacity and opportunity to internationalize than those with lesser experience and service period (Ibid).

The new policy move by the Ethiopian government to differentiating universities into those focusing on teaching and others on research may help in accelerating efforts to join the global network of knowledge and research if they receive adequate supports during their process of transition from comprehensive teaching to research and innovation focused institutions. Research universities, as the authors noted, are very expensive and require major expenditure. They also require consistent funding over a long period of time. Allocating sufficient resources to build staff capacity, equip the institutions with research facilities and fund research projects may need to be considered as priority actions of the government.

Policy, structure and addressing existing challenges
The task of inducing appropriate planning and execution structure for internationalization at both national and institutional level has been overlooked, except for a slight mentioning by the ESDP-V of the importance of establishing an "international liaison office" at universities and a national coordinating body (Ethiopia, Ministry of Education 2015). The GTP-II also provides for a very generic statement of the need to "formulate a national level framework to guide the partnership and collaboration efforts of universities across the board" (Ethiopia, National Planning Commission 2015, 189).

This indicates that, a detailed national guiding policy document dedicated specifically to guiding the internationalization efforts of the respective institutions incorporating all the most relevant elements and components has not yet been the case but should be issued in the shortest possible time frame. Moreover, most of the elements indicated in the policy documents are restricted to what has been categorized as *the activity approach* to internationalization by Knight and De Wit (1995) and Zha (2003), which embraces, according to the scholars, student and faculty exchange, joint research activities, technical assistance and attracting international students. The other recommended approaches which should be part and components of internationalization policy and action such as *competency approach* focusing on developing new skills, attitude, knowledge and values in students and faculty; *the process approach* that stresses on integrating

international and intercultural dimension in to teaching, research and service functions through institution wide plans, strategies and structures and finally the *ethos approach* that emphasizes on creating a culture or climate that values and supports international/intercultural perspectives in institutions, are less well underlined in the policy documents.

Knight and De Wit further commented on the necessity of underpinning an increasing number of academic programs as activities by permanent organizational commitment and structure. According to them,

> Internationalization needs to be entrenched into the culture, policy, planning and organization process of the institution so that it is not marginalized or treated as a passing fad….by only focusing on the academic program activities one can overlook the organization process issues which are important to ensuring that the different activities reinforce each other, that they become central to the mission of the university. When internationalization activities are fragmented and isolated on campus there is an increased chance that the impact and benefit will be weakened (Knight and De Wit 1995, 20).

Hence, a national policy document that guides internationalization activities and efforts of HEIs may need to pursue an integrated/comprehensive approach, combining all the aforementioned approaches.

It should be noted that there could be challenges to be faced at the initial phases of internationalizing universities in Ethiopia. The higher education system is understandably at the nascent stage of entrenching intercultural and international dimensions into its education, research, and service functions and there is an observed disparity among institutions in the extent to which they are engaged in international partnerships and collaborations. Most of the universities with long academic traditions, referred as *first generation universities* are known to have established linkages and partnerships in certain fields of internationalization, but have to go long ways if they have to join the global network of knowledge and reap more benefits.

One of the expected challenges could be funding of internationalization activities. This is because resources are limited as more focuses are given to expanding the higher education system and providing services of very basic nature to ensure access and equitable distribution to the ever increasing youth population in the country.

Thus internationalization, while being an expensive venture, the required resources are not allocated due to their channeling to other priorities such as expansion of more universities. Internationalization may not be effectively executed with entire dependence on resources from external funding, as has been the case till to date.

One way of practicing a proactive engagement into the international knowledge society is to support, at least, few aspects of internationalization activities with resources from local sources. Without such commitment, promoting institutional visibility may not be easily attained to the expected level and in the required time frame. In this regard, Van Damme (2001, 428) clearly stated that "institutions across the world may face lack of adequate financial resources for major international initiatives" added with absence of coherent and explicit national and institutional level strategies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study identified that the task of internationalizing universities has not been sufficiently provided with policy guidelines to define rationales, objectives and aims and set guiding principles for individual institutions in their efforts towards internationalization. This has been the case with education policy documents and programs consecutively issued until recently. Some of the policy documents provided very broad guiding principles on the necessity of establishing international connections for student and staff exchange, joint-research and grants aiming at improving the quality of research and education in the institutions. Otherwise the study marked the absence of a comprehensive policy document that guides the activities of internationalization in the Ethiopian HEIs.

The policy documents acknowledged higher education as a key driver and strategic sector to producing highly qualified graduates well enough to compete in the national and international employment market. The higher education system, beyond providing qualified human power to the expanding industrial sector, is also assigned to prepare competent graduates for the international market. This, however, requires strong international engagement in attracting international students to create a diverse and multicultural educational environment. One of the most effective mechanisms of preparing future graduates for international employment market is promoting international mobility of students for cross boarder education which has not been clearly highlighted by the policy documents in Ethiopia.

The policy documents also aspire to improving quality of educational programs in the Ethiopian HEIs.

The task of inducing appropriate planning and execution structure at both national and institutional levels, to play a spearheading role in internationalizing respective institutions has been overlooked, except for a slight mentioning of broader frameworks by few of the policy documents. This indicates that a detailed national guiding policy document dedicated specifically to guiding the internationalization efforts of the respective institutions incorporating all the most relevant elements and components has not yet been put in place or yet to be put in place.

Results of the review article suggest the following recommendations:

- the national government should put in place policy frameworks that take into account elements and components of internationalization to follow a comprehensive approach;

- besides differentiating universities into research and teaching institutions, research universities should receive adequate support during their process of transition to a research and innovation focused institution pursuing proactive approaches to engage in joint research projects with international partners; and

- Ethiopian universities should consider initiating collaborative schemes and partnerships that could improve the quality of educational programs to meet international requirements and standards.

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