Malaysia's Educational Efforts in Southern Africa: Creating Opportunities, Developing Partnerships
(Usaha Pendidikan Malaysia di Afrika Selatan: Membuka Peluang ke Arah Perkongsian)

Muhammed Haron*

Abstract

During this era of globalization and over the past two decades which coincides with post-Cold War developments, the world has witnessed major transformations taking place in international relations on different levels. The Southern Africa communities have observed radical transformation in the educational system as well as changes in educational policies and structures elsewhere in the region. They have, for example, seen the establishment of new educational institutions such as branches of Lim Kok Wing University of Creative Technology (LUCT) in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, and they witnessed the formation of educational partnerships between institutions such as the International Peace College (IPSA) of Southern Africa and the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM). These developments have undoubtedly contributed towards empowering individuals from the region and this demonstrated the viability of creating new educational opportunities and educational partnerships that have thus far taken place between Malaysia's educational institutions and Southern African communities. The essay's purpose is to reflect upon Malaysia's educational interventions in Southern Africa; it does so by (1) reflecting upon the IIUM's educational partnership with the Cape Town based IPSA, (2) commenting on Dunia Melayu Dunia Islam's (DMDI) language programme in Cape Town, and by (c) reviewing the Botswana based LUCT's educational contributions in Botswana. Adopting a historical reflective approach and based upon the respective assessments and reviews, the essay's findings underlined that these significant educational connections have created new academic opportunites for certain sectors of the Southern African communities; and since this the case the general conclusion is that academic interventions and partnerships can make a huge difference in educational development.

Keywords: Malaysia, South Africa, Botswana, Educational Partnership, Globalization

Abstrak

Dunia telah menyaksikan perubahan besar yang berlaku dalam hubungan antarabangsa pada tahap yang berbeza serentak dengan perkembangan pasca-Perang Dingin dalam era globalisasi lebih dua dekad yang lalu. Komuniti Afrika Selatan telah memerhatikan perubahan radikal dalam sistem pendidikan serta perubahan dalam dasar-dasar dan struktur pendidikan di rantau ini. Sebagai contoh, mereka telah menyaksikan penubuhan institusi pendidikan baharu seperti cawangan Lim Kok Wing University of Creative Technology (LUCT) di Botswana, Lesotho dan Swaziland. Mereka juga menyaksikan pembentukan kerjasama pendidikan di antara institusi seperti Kolej Keamanan Antarabangsa (KKA) Afrika Selatan dan Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM). Perkembangan ini pasti menyumbang ke arah memperkasakan individu di rantau ini. Hal ini menunjukkan bahawa daya maju untuk mewujudkan peluang pendidikan dan perkongsian baharu pendidikan yang sehingga kini berlaku di antara institusi pendidikan Malaysia dengan masyarakat Afrika Selatan. Tujuan esei ini adalah untuk melihat kembali campur tangan pendidikan Malaysia di Afrika Selatan, ia berbuat demikian kerana: (1) mencerminkan perkongsian pendidikan UIAM dengan Cape Town berasaskan IPSA, (2) menilai mengenai Dunia Melayu Dunia Islam (DMDI) program bahasa di Cape Town, dan (3) mengkaji semula sumbangan pendidikan Botswana berasaskan LUCT di Botswana. Pendekatan yang mencerminkan sejarah berdasarkan penilaian masing-masing serta ulasan, penemuan esei yang digariskan telah mewujudkan peluang-peluang akademik dan hubungan pendidikan yang baharu dalam sektor-sektor tertentu dalam kalangan masyarakat Afrika Selatan. Sebagai kesimpulan, campur tangan akademik dan perkongsian boleh membuat perubahan yang besar dalam pembangunan pendidikan.

Kata kunci: Malaysia, South Africa, Botswana, Kerjasama pendidikan, Globalisasi

INTRODUCTION

In the eyes of the international community, Malaysia is generally viewed as an important Southeast Asian 'tiger' that has contributed substantially to the region's economic status. Apart from this, Malaysia has also been considered as a significant educational hub that attracted investments in the form of partnerships between Malaysia's educational institutions and foreign educational institutions; for example, Australia's Monash University and Britain's University of Nottingham are among those that have set up branches to expand their tertiary programs by injecting financial cum educational investments that will eventually flow into other parts of the Southeast Asian region. In the process of embarking on these educational ventures and creating educational partnerships with the foreign tertiary institutions, it ignited a similar spirit among Malaysia's universities; a coterie of these institutions proactively initiated programs that reached out to other regions and to other parts of the world. Since Malaysia's educational tertiary institutions have adopted this approach, the purpose of this essay is to demonstrate how specific institutions in Malaysia have made decisive educational interventions in certain parts of Southern Africa.

The essay, which is purely an historical reflection of educational developments between Malaysia and Southern Africa, considers these developments on two levels. The first assesses the International Islamic University of Malaysia's (IIUM) partnership with the Cape Town based Muslim educational institution, namely International Peace College of South Africa (IPSA); the second evaluates the Bahasa Melayu programme that was offered in Cape Town with the support of Dunia Melayu Dunia Islam (DMDI); and the third reviews Lim Kok Wing University of Creative Technology's (LUCT) role in contributing towards skills development in countries such as Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Since there is a conspicuous absence of published material on Malaysia's educational interventions in Southern Africa, the essay sees itself as filling an important gap by pursuing a historical-educational approach; an approach that may assist one to fully appreciate the nature of these crucial educational interventions. The essay was also undertaken with the fervent hope that other researchers in the field of education will consider pursuing a more detailed study.

That aside and according to this essay's findings, the Malaysian educational interventions have succeeded in bringing to the Southern African region (1) fresh programs that were - to some extent – absent, and in making 2) a qualitative input to the region's educational system. The method adopted to pursue this research is somewhat text-based and this was further supported by a few informal discussions and interviews with individuals who have been associated with tehse developments. Nevertheless before evaluating these educational developments, the essay begins by employing 'partnerships' as an appropriate theoretical frame. A conceptual frame that should be considered within a fairly broad 'international (educational) relations' context; a context within which Southeast Asian and Southern African educational institutions form an integral part.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

During the post-Cold War period educationists and educational institutions around the world have generally realized that forging of educational partnerships - as had been witnessed in many societies – has resulted in positive outcomes for all parties involved in such an educational arrangement. For one to fully appreciate such a development in the new millennium there is a need to briefly unpack this concept and relate it to matters in international affairs in general and in the educational sector in particular.

Now when one thinks back about the Asian-African Summit, which was held in Jakarta on the 22nd and 23rd of April 2005 and which was jointly sponsored by South Africa and Indonesia, it was observed that when the two continents' representatives agreed upon a working relationship they formulated what has been referred to as 'a strategic partnership between Asia and Africa' (i.e. a South-South partnership that led to the New Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership [NAASP]); the idea behind this formulation was to envisage in the years ahead the promotion of close cooperation in the fields of, among others, economy, investment,

technology, human resources development and education. The outcome of this summit and earlier meetings led to diverse forms of partnerships (such as the cooperation between Association of South East Asian Nations [ASEAN] and the Southern Africa Development Community [SADC]).

The crucial word used at this summit as well as other gatherings prior to this summit was the word 'partnership'. The question that immediately arises is: What does this word mean and what are the implications when it is employed in educational circles? The concept has been used as a way of advancing the interest of all parties involved in the partnership. The *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (2001: 850) offered the following meanings: (1) the state of being a partner in a business, (2) a relationship between two people, organizations, etc. and (3) a business owned by two or more persons who share the profits. A brief look at the dictionary meanings reflected that though the meanings differed slightly from one another they essentially connoted similar understandings. The last mentioned interpretation of the term implies, for example, that the owners who own the business such as a private educational institution have a pure business relationship in which the partners (foreign and local) reached an agreement in which they hope to enjoy and have an equal share; in other words they agreed, the way the educational institution as a joint business venture should be managed and how the educational institution's profits and losses should be shared.

Shifting from the dictionary understanding of the concept to another proffered by a *New Straits Times* columnist, K.S. John 2002: 11 who noted yet another faintly different interpretation of the concept. John argued in 'Adopting Smart Partnership Ideals' that the mode of partnership is premised upon two variables: (1) mutual respect for one another, and (2) trust to jointly take a risk and reward sharing. From this it is concluded that all parties share equally and that they have a common goal wherein both 'act' towards profit sharing; both, in other words, gain through the process of action. He further made the point that real and smart partnerships "must ensure that all parties in a venture experience a win." He referred to the Langkawi International Dialogue (LID) that was initiated and promoted by Dr. M. Mahathir

as a way of contributing towards South-South dialogue and cooperation; an initiative that might inject an Afro-Asian Renaissance. The LID forum sought to develop and promote a smart partnership philosophy of 'Prosper The Neighbour;' a philosophy that is somewhat embedded within the religious philosophy that Mahathir articulated and adhered to. The relationship in this partnership is thus viewed as being one where there is mutual trust, respect and openness; within this type of partnership there is ample opportunity for dialogue, cooperation and collaboration in all spheres.

This explanation links up with what Axelrod (2004) underlined when he stated that, "a working definition of partnership is a collaborative relationship between entities to work towards shared objectives through mutually agreed division of labor." And in another context, Nel et. al (2000: 27) stressed that "partnerships are a way of using the resources and skills in a community (and government) in such a way that all partners benefit…." Nel et. al (2000) also made the point that the formation of a partnership is not a short-cut to obtain quick (financial) rewards. By partnership is meant bringing two or more groups together to participate in discussing about potential business projects such as joint educational programs (e.g. the joint IIUM and IPSA program), consulting one another regularly about − for example - LUCT's educational developments in Botswana, setting up the relevant educational infra-structures, and balancing the competing educational interests. In this regard, Axelrod (2004) highlighted the fact that "a partnership is not a gift … (but) aims to take advantage of what the recipient (e.g. Botswana's educational community), as well as the donor (i.e. the investing educational institution [such as LUCT]), can bring to the relationship," and this would include local expertise and better understanding of the needs and priorities. And this further relates to the view expressed by Ingram (2004) when he referred to Douglas North; the latter stated that partnership should be viewed "as an instrument to build the institutional capacity that is needed to improve economic (and educational) performance." When carefully reflecting upon these explanations, one cannot overlook the fact that they tie in well with what has been taking place within and beyond Southeast Asia's educational sector in general and Malaysia's educational system in particular.

Malaysia's Dynamic Educational Environment

Over the decades when Dr. M. Mahathir was in office as the Prime Minister, he ensured that all departments in the government be given the necessary attention (Middlehurst & Woodfield 2004); this was particularly so during the post-Cold War or during Malaysia's post-New Economic Policy era that coincided with the process of globalization and with what has been dubbed 'the neo-liberal period' (Rao 2007; Morshidi 2010; Zaaba et al 2011). Since the Ministry of Education (MoE) – which was split into two by 2004 to form the Ministry of Higher Education - was one of the critical ministries, he made certain that it received the funds to improve the educational institutions from the primary to the tertiary levels (Lee 2003; Morshidi 2010). All his Ministers of Education therefore had to keep tabs on the educational developments; they had to see that these were generally on track, educational goals were achieved and that Malaysia's youth was exposed to a fairly good and competitive educational environment. Mahathir was obsessed in creating a developed society; by this was meant that a society that had "… a sufficiently sophisticated system of education and training that … disseminate knowledge and skills throughout … the learning society" (Aziz 1993).

This open and positive approach towards the educational sector fell squarely in line with the neo-liberal educational developments that were unfolding globally. As a result of Malaysia opening itself up to the world market, many educational institutions from the UK, USA, Australia and elsewhere chose to set up educational structures in various parts of Malaysia as a form of educational investment (Tham 2011). Malaysians thus witnessed the presence of a variety of prominent universities luring Malaysians and others from the region to register and study at their institutions. These developments shook up the educational sector and they led to a healthy competitive spirit among foreign and national educational institutions. Since the Malaysian landscape was quite energetic and open, some of the foreign institutions opted to educationally invade the educational space in Malaysia and went on to establish and set up their independent institutions.

Middlehurst & Woodfield's informative executive summary report (2004) identified some of those that had transnational branch campuses in Malaysia; for example, they mentioned as examples: Sunway Monash Campus Malaysia, Curtin University of Technology, Miri Sarawak, University of Nottingham in Malaysia, and FTMS-De Montfort University Campus, Malaysia (Tham 2011).

There are, however, others that opted to partner or twin with local national institutions. Once again Middlehurst & Woodfield highlighted this aspect in their comprehensive report; apart from explaining the key features of this type of programme, they (2004) stated that, "The twinning or split-degree concept was introduced in Malaysia in 1980. It involves a formal agreement between a local private college and one, or a consortium of foreign universities, to run a split-site degree programme. This allows the student to partially complete the programme at the local institution with the final year(s) at the specified foreign partner university which then awards the degree." Since this type of programme is gradually being transplanted and accepted in the Southern African educational sector, one may describe Malaysia's proactive approach as a wise decision since it permitted its educational environment to evolve into a vibrant one and set itself apart from what one sees in Southern Africa. With this as a useful backdrop, perhaps it is helpful to make reference to 'Malaysia's Educational Plan' (MEP) that focused on the period from 2001 until 2010. The MEP, it should be stated, was embedded in the following educational philosophy that the MoE publicly espoused: "Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being, as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of the family, the society, and the nation at large" (Middlehurst & Woodfield 2004).

The MEP was in effect Malaysia's educational 'blue print' for the first decade during the new millennium and it operated under the motto:

'generating educational excellence through collaboration planning.' The blue print basically set certain goals that captured Malaysia's National Vision Policy (NVP); a policy that was concerned with, among others, building a resilient nation and a knowledge-based economy. For the purpose of this essay, mention shall be made some of the key aims of the MEP before giving some thought to its thrust; the aims that it identified were: "to nurture creativity and innovativeness among students"; "to enhance learning culture"; "to offer an effective, world-class quality education system"; and "to promote Malaysia as a center of education excellence." The last two aims clearly demonstrate that Malaysia saw itself creating a stimulating and inspiring educational environment that would not just be on par with what was educationally on offer elsewhere in the world but that its educational institutions maintained outstanding standards that would attract students and staff from various parts of the globe. As a result of these aims, five of its national universities (University of Malaya) performed well as teachings and research institutions; they have been ranked among the 100 best Asian universities at the end of 2010.

At this point it will be apt to briefly regurgitate MEP's educational thrust before going any further. The MEP urged the MoE to see that the educational environment granted the students the chance to access education at different levels and that the education that they received was of a qualitative nature (Marimuthu 2008: 278); and it also demanded that the MoE transform and improve the management's efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, the government expected that the MoE to equitably distribute educational inputs so that the students "obtain appropriate learning experiences from all educational programmes" (Jamil 2010; Tham 2011). The MEP's drive over the past two decades and particularly the first decade during the new millennium seem to have delivered and achieved some of the educational goals that the MoE identified. It has, among others, attracted hordes of undergraduate and post-graduate foreign students (approximately 100,000) that – in some instances - went beyond the 25% that was targeted by the end of 2010; it created the necessary infrastructure such as establishing Research & Development centers at local universities that maintained international standards and coped with the overall developments in the country; and it performed well because of having adopted an internationalization policy of local universities. Now all of these developments and outcomes are based on the fact that Malaysia implemented a strategic plan that saw to it that became "a center of academic excellence."

In this summarized version of Malaysia's educational landscape, it is quite obvious that its government has done a great deal over the years to develop its educational environment into an attractive one through the twin processes of globalization and internationalization (Zaaba 2011). The outcome of this long educational gestation has caused Anglophone governments in Africa, for example, to make policy decisions by sending their students to Malaysia to pursue higher education. The one reason for doing so may be attributed to the fact that whilst the higher education system is competitive and compares favorably to similar systems in the UK and the USA, Malaysia's education is reasonably inexpensive and the other is that the system is easily accessible since all courses are taught in English even though Bahasa Melayu is Malaysia's official language (ibid 2011). In this regard Botswana's government made a conscious decision of sending students for higher studies to Malaysia and at the same time it opened itself to foreign institutions that desired to establish branches in order to contribute in a substantial manner to the educational environment. That said, the focus of the essay now shifts to the Southern African educational scene.

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN EDUCATIONAL SCENE

Since Southern Africa or the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) is a fairly vast region that includes 15 nation-states and due to space constraints, the essay will only confine itself to educational scenarios in South Africa and Botswana respectively. This being the case this section captures a few points about the educational developments in Southern Africa. One of the structures that the educationists have put in place in 1995 is the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ); this is a structure that was established by a consortium of Ministries of Education from 15

different countries in the Southern and East African region; the focus is, however, specifically on the schooling sector. On a regional basis their aim as a consortium was essentially threefold: the one was (1) to undertake and monitor the integrated research and training activities, (2) to evaluate the quality of basic education, and (3) to generate information that can be used by decision-makers to plan and improve the quality of education. At a different level the region set up in 2005 the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) that looks at and evaluates the tertiary institutions. The organization was formed to help with "the revitalisation and development of the leadership and institutions of higher education in the southern African region" with the hope of creating an enabling higher education environment that would respond in a meaningful manner to the variety of developmental challenges that all the region's nation-states encounter.

SOUTH AFRICA'S EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

South Africa is at present one of the key players in SACMEQ and SARUA as well as in other similar or related organizations that have been set up by SADC. It is a known fact that South Africa was an apartheid state before 1994 and during this era it had an educational landscape that was discriminatory and inequitable. In this racist society, the Whites benefitted economically, politically, socially and educationally and as a result of these circumstances the oppressed masses were treated inhumanely and were not given the necessary educational opportunities to transform themselves. As soon as the Government of National Unity was formed after the April 1994 elections, the Ministry of Education (MoE) was among those that had to be overhauled. This was no easy task and as a consequence many changes such as (inopportunely) reducing the number of tertiary institutions through mergers and other processes took place in this sector. A draft educational action plan was devised with the objective of strengthening the weak areas in the schooling system and these strategies have been developed to fall in line with the President's 2009 National Strategic Plan. Statutory Bodies such

as The Council on Higher Education (CHE) and South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA); the former was assigned the task of, inter alia, advising the Minister of Education on 'education matters' and to play 'a key role in quality assurance,' and the latter was and remains responsible for the development and implementation of the National Quality Framework (SARUA 2009; SARUA 2009b; Allais 2010).

After a few years of investigation and consultation the government brought about changes in the higher education sector. Since some of these were successful and others failures, the South African society has been deeply affected by these educational developments. Apart from the effects of these outcomes, the present government under Mr. Jacob Zuma saw it prudent to split the department of education into two; the one focused on Basic Education and the other on Higher Education. All the tertiary institutions such as universities and colleges now fall in the hands of the Ministry of Higher Education and Training. Since this Ministry oversees the post-school institutions all of the public and private tertiary institutions have to be registered with the Ministry and the amended Higher Education Act has since come into effect. Over the years many private institutions were established and whilst some succeeded in getting themselves accredited with the Ministry others such as International Peace College of South Africa (IPSA) continued to struggle to obtain accreditation. And now that the Higher Education Act has been amended, it has made it much more difficult for private community based institutions to find recognition. In fact, according to this Act it prohibits private tertiary institutions from issuing degrees and using known university staff titles. If the institution would want to do so, it will have to comply with the regulations stipulated by the amended Higher Education Act.

SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNATIONAL PEACE COLLEGE OF SOUTH AFRICA

From among those community based institutions that eventually managed to be given accreditation by the Ministry of Higher Educaiton & Training (MHET) is IPSA. IPSA took quite long to achieve this and this may partly be attributed to the fact that the South African government created a Ministry

for Higher Education that brought about radical amendments to the Higher Education Act for those private educational institutions that desired to award under-graduate degrees programmes. For the record, IPSA had to go through various levels in order to be registered as a private higher education institution. After having successfully presented its curriculum to the Higher Education Qualifications Authority (HEQC) of the Council of Higher Education (CHE) – a structure that was founded under the Higher Education Act and administered by South Africa's MHET, IPSA's application was eventually approved by South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA); a structure that basically registers and controls credit requirements as well as the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) criteria for all tertiary institutions (Allais 2010). On the 16th of February 2013 Dr. Blade Nzimande, the Minister of MHET, endorsed IPSA as an accredited educational institution at a special function in Cape Town.

Now that IPSA has been granted the status of issuing undergraduate (theological) degrees under its new academic leadership spearheaded by Shaykh Ighsaan Taliep, who holds a Masters in Comparative Law (MCL) from IIUM and Dr. Shaykh Abdul-Kariem Toffar, who holds a doctorate degree in Islamic Studies from the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), it hopes to fast-track and transform developments at the institution. At present IPSA offers a three year BA Islamic Studies degree course; for this course a student may register for a minimum of three years on a fulltime basis or a minimum five years on a part time basis. The BA degree has been structured in such as manner that it will "align vertically within IPSA and horizontally with the other South African universities" (Toffar 2012). Since the MHET stated that it was considering extending all three year BA degree programmes to four years since a four year degree programme is viewed as a professional one, IPSA might follow suit when this idea becomes a reality within the South African educational circles.

IPSA, which came about as a result of the merger of two Muslim institutions, namely the Islamic College of Southern Africa (ICOSA) and Darul Arqam Islamic Institute (DAII) (Haron 1997), is essentially a modern version of the traditional Muslim theological seminary (i.e.

Darul 'Ulum) that offers an under-graduate degree programme in the Islamic Sciences. For the past few years IPSA offered the following courses: Arabic, Islamic Legislative History, Islamic Jurisprudence, Muslim Personal Law, Quranic Commentary, Hadith, Islamic Theology and Religious Studies that the student pursues over the three/five year period. The institution depends upon outside scholars to assist in the external examination process and to help audit the courses. Apart from the degree programme, it also provides short-term enrichment certificate programmes on a part-time basis. IPSA modernized itself through partnering with other local institutions to provide a wide range of non-Islamic studies courses; it partnered with the Mintin School of Development Studies (an institution that focuses on social development training) and the Shanaaz Parker Culinary Academy (an institution that concentrates on the services and catering industry) that were founder members of IPSA. It was subsequently joined by the Association for Quranic Recitation and Memorization popularly known as the *Jam`iyyah al-Qurra' Hafiz Academy*.

Soon after IPSA's formation, its administrative leadership spearheaded by Dr. Salie Abrahams who was for a while the deputy principal embarked upon an internationalization process. The idea was to liaise and link up with particularly Muslim academic institutions in the Muslim world and to create opportunities for their students to further their studies abroad. But during the time IPSA did so, some of its graduates were successfully absorbed into the local academic institutions such as the University of Cape Town (UCT, University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ) where they were allowed to enter and register for the bridging post-graduate course or permitted to go directly into the BA Honors Islamic Studies programme. After the successful completion of this degree at these institutions, a handful proceeded to register for the MA degrees (and later their doctorates) at these institutions. These developments showed promise and were viewed as important openings for those who were serious in furthering their interest in Islamic Studies and related disciplines. In the light of these, IPSA's internationalization programme was seen as another alternative route towards pursuing post-graduate studies. Perhaps

one should pause at this juncture and reflect upon the collaborative IPSA and IIUM programme that was active for at least three years. Here the essay relied heavily on a mimeo that was received from the current IPSA Deputy Principal, Dr. Toffar (7 May 2012).

IPSA's former deputy principal, Dr. Salie Abrahams, proactively pursued ties with institutions in Malaysia and Indonesia respectively. The IIUM, which attracted a number of African students, was one of the institutions that Dr Abrahams consciously targeted. In response the IIUM agreed to have bilateral academic relations with IPSA and this eventually culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutions and, according to Dr. Toffar, is still operational. Along with these educational initiatives, Dr. Abrahams also established religio-cultural contact with the Malacca based Dunia Melayu Dunia Islam (DMDI) (van der Putten 2011: 224-226). Although the signing of the MoU was with IIUM, it was specifically signed with the Ahmad Ibrahim College of Laws (AIKOL) that is a constituent college of IIUM. Most of the Masters in Comparative Law (MCL) courses, which have been part of the AIKOL list of offerings for quite a number of years, were taught by AIKOL's staff. They were, however, assisted by three South African scholars; one of the three scholars was Associate Professor Nazeem Goolam who used to lecture at the University of South Africa and he has since moved to Rhodes University. At the latter institution Goolam continued to teach law and for the record he obtained his doctorate in Islamic law from AIKOL. He was joined by Shaykh Faiq Gamieldien who holds an MCL from IIUM and joined the teaching staff as an external lecturer; and they were, in turn, joined by Dr. Toffar who is an IPSA staff member who holds an Islamic Studies UKZN doctorate that focused on Muslim Personal Law. Whilst Gamieldien was responsible for 'Islamic Criminal Law', Toffar took charge of the 'Islamic Family and Personal Law' course. Besides these two subjects and in this unique arrangement, the other subjects on the MCL menu were: Islamic Thought, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence and Legal Maxims, Principles of Islamic Government, Islamic Banking & Takaful, Islamic Law of Evidence, and Islamic Law of Contract & Obligations.

The MCL programme was initially coordinated by Dr. Auwais Rafudeen who has since moved to the University of South Africa; and thereafter it was coordinated by Dr. Toffar. And in Dr. Toffar's capacity as the coordinator he went to Malaysia to discuss with, among others, AIKOL's Dean, Deputy-Dean (Postgraduate affairs), Director of the Graduate School, and the Deputy Dean (Student Affairs) to sort out some of the issues such as the marking criteria and course assessments that seemed to have hindered the programme's progress. From the start of the programme in 2008 six students were registered and by the end of the programme only five students satisfied the MCL degree requirements; they thus successfully graduated in October 2010 at IIUM's Convocation in Kuala Lumpur. Despite the candidates' achievements in the special circumstances that were made as a consequence of the MoU that was in place, the nature of the agreement was such that IPSA was burdened with sorting out the logistics; an issue that unreasonably burdened an economically constrained IPSA financially. In the light of this IPSA will have to revisit the MoU as well as the set of agreements that were reached if this particular programme is to continue in the future; at present, IPSA was forced to suspend the MoU because of some of its mentioned constraints and because of the amended Higher Education Act that effectively barred and restricted institutions such as IPSA from continuing with the MoU. With hindsight, it is perhaps a blessing in disguise because the new developments offer IPSA the opportunity to rethink 'the experiment' and perhaps reach a fresh agreement that will be equally and fairly shared between IPSA and IIUM. And even though IIUM is a bona fide Malaysian institution it will have to be granted an accredited status by the South African Council of Higher Education (CHE) before it - along with IPSA - can continue with the MCL degree programme.

Notwithstanding all the challenges that IPSA faced over the years, the MoU that was signed between IIUM and IPSA is still in place and IPSA should be able to continue its relationship with IIUM by considering exchanges of different kinds; this can, however, only happen as long as they fall within the set of restrictions imposed and dictated by the present South African Higher Education Act. Now that IPSA is an accredited institution,

there is a degree of optimism that it will find ways of overcoming the contraints that it encountered when the MCL program was operational. That aside, the essay moves on to discuss another IPSA program that was pursued with a Malaysian NGO.

THE 'BAHASA MELAYU' COMMUNITY LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Although IPSA offers Arabic as a key language in its Islamic Studies programme, it did not make an effort – as far as is known - to weave into its programme the offering of other 'Muslim' languages such as Persian, Urdu and Bahasa Melayu and Urdu; this may be attributed to IPSA's financial and other limitations. As a matter of information, early attempts were made to have Bahasa Melayu introduced at a Cape tertiary institution during the mid 1990s; despite the efforts that were made to bring this into fruition all of these came to naught (Haron 1995). The efforts, in fact, got underway soon after GAPENA (i.e. Federation of Malaysian Writers' Union held its joint conference with the ad-hoc Malaysian Welcome Committee in 1993 at UWC in Cape Town. At that point Cape Muslim groups who were inspired by GAPENA's inputs under Tan Sri Professor Ismail Hussein's leadership endeavored to have Bahasa Melayu introduced at one of the two local universities, namely UCT or UWC. During those years GAPENA was given the necessary moral support by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP that was under the erstwhile leadership of Hj. Abdul Aziz Deraman. Since Tan Sri Ismail Hussein worked with UWC, the first attempt was made to have the idea approved in principle by the university administration. Although they managed to have an MoU signed between UWC and DBP, the Asian economic crisis broke out and it immediately affected and scuttled all the plans that were worked out by DBP and GAPENA (Haron 2005: 2008).

Despite this, Dr. Yasien Mohamed who was a UWC member continued to be in close contact with Hj. Abdul Aziz Deraman with the hope of having Bahasa Melayu included in the Department of Foreign Languages (and Cultures) programme in the Faculty of Arts after the turn of the millennium. To date, this was not to be and perhaps fresh attempts should be made with DMDI spearheading the project this time round. It was, in fact, only when DMDI came onto the Cape scene in 2007 that the idea was revisited and given the required attention at the community level however (Haron 2006/2007: Kamedien 2012). Apparently, Ebrahim Rasool who was then premier of South Africa's Western Cape Province had been in touch with Datuk Seri Hj. Mohd Ali Rustam Malacca's Chief Minister regarding this issue; he, it seems, made a special request to send a teacher and as a result of this special request DMDI identified a teacher who was able to offer an intensive Bahasa and culture course. DMDI sent Hj. Osman Samit, who hails from Malacca, to teach Bahasa Melayu at IPSA for a period of two years from 2007. As a new course, it was introduced as an elective subject within the IPSA programme (Toffar 17 May 2012); though the course was offered to IPSA students it was also open to the general public. When the course began the class consisted of about 16 students and during that same period Hj. Osman also presented the course on the Voice of the Cape; the local Muslim community radio station (*Die Burger* 18 December 2007; *Community News* July 2008; *Muslim Views* 2008). Hj. Osman, according to Kamedien, adopted a dictionary approach to the teaching of Bahasa Melayu instead of socio-linguistic conversational approach.

From the available information, it seems that if the necessary financial support can be given to appoint a teacher on a two or three year contract basis and if IPSA – which is 'ideally placed' – can be used as a "social laboratory to develop, customise, design and test Bahasa Melayu language acquisition programme" (Kamedien 2012), then it will draw on a potential pool of students from the Cape Flats area, which is located outside Cape Town city centre, and it will produce the required results. In fact, the short language course that was conducted proved that the programme was not only doable but that it was immensely beneficial despite its 'dictionary approach' to those who registered for it. The course gave them a taste of the language and it imparted the rudimentary dimensions of Bahasa (Salie 2007; Salie 2012; Anon 2008). Unfortunately, a follow-up course was not possible because Hj. Osman suddenly left and he was later assigned to go to Beijing where he remained until 2012. By the end of 2008 another course was advertised for the month of January 2009, but this did not come off the ground because

of extenuating circumstances outside the facilitator and IPSA's control (Kamedien 2012). During 2008 Indonesia's Cape Town based Consulate-General Adradjati came to the aid of a group of learners to provide a classes in Bahasa Indonesia; these were, however, conducted by South Africans who had studied in Indonesia. Sadly though, soon after Consulate-General Adradjati's departure for Jakarta this class came to an abrupt halt leaving the students at a loss (Kamedien 2012).

Before moving on to the next section, it should be recorded that Ms. Nazreen Salie, who worked for a while in the real estate arena, shifted her focus to the Southeast Asian tourism and business sector; she formed her private close corporation Cape Malay Consultants cc to pursue her interest in the mentioned areas. In her capacity as the sole driving force behind CMC with an interest in Bahasa Melayu, she helped to coordinate and facilitate the programme by liaising between DMDI, IPSA and the community (Kamedien 2012). She, for the record, received her certificate from the former Prime Minister Mustafa Badawi at the 8th Annual Conference of DMDI in Malaysia (*Die Burger* 18 December 2007).

The Bahasa Melayu classes demonstrated how the community managed academic institutions such as IPSA was able to partner and cooperate with international NGOs such as DMDI to present a worthwhile language programme to the Cape community. Indeed it is the issue of partnership that has been a key variable in bringing about transformation at both the individual and communal levels respectively; and this is something that the Batswana have witnessed since the entrance of Lim Kok Wing University of Creative Technology (LUCT) as a private tertiary institution in Botswana.

BOTSWANA'S LUCT

During the past few years Botswana like South Africa brought changes in the Higher Education sector. After having formed the Tertiary Educational Council (TEC) that oversees the mentioned segment, it set itself the task of (1) developing a new framework for tertiary education, (2) creating a new Department of Tertiary Education (DTE) within the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MESD), and

(3) establishing and administering a new National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (MoE -DTE 2005). According to 2012 data Botswana has 2 public funded universities, 31 Higher Education funded institutions and colleges, and 5 privately funded institutions (SARUA 2009a; SARUA 2009). And according to the online university directory managed by the European Union Botswana was the home of a sizeable number of university colleges and institutes.

The university colleges in Botswana are: BA ISAGO University College, Botho College, Bots University College Law School, Botswana Accountancy College, Botswana College of Agriculture, Botswana College of Distance Education and Open Learning, and Botswana Institute of Administration and Commerce and the following institutes and universities are the ones that presently operate: Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), Institute of Development Management, University of Botswana (UB) and Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST). As a matter of information, the last mentioned is the second university that the government established during the past five years. These were, however, not the only institutions in Botswana when this directory was published; the compilers, who audited the list of active tertiary institutions in Botswana, forgot to include Lim Kok Wing University of Creative Technology (SARUA 2009a). Despite this oversight, it is instructive to share how LUCT, which started out as a corporate company under Tan Sri Lim Kok Wing's leadership way back in the early 1990s, succeeded to establish itself as a significant player in the tertiary education sector and an institution that has created a niche for itself within the Botswana educational arena (OGB 2009).

On the 14th of May 2007, LUCT was launched on African soil in Botswana; it opened its doors to Batswana as well as students from other parts of the continent. LUCT targeted Botswana since it was the one African country that was truly inspired by Malaysia's Vision 2020 (Marimuthu 2008; Zaaba 2011) and a country that devised and issued the Vision 2016 policy document with the intention of taking the Batswana into the future. LUCT saw this as a strategic move because as a Malaysian institution it embraced Malaysia's

internationalization of Higher Education posture (Badawi 2004). Armed with this global vision and outlook, LUCT thus kept its sights on the future by placing itself in a position to internationalize education and to do so in Botswana.

Stationing itself on African soil, LUCT seemed to have clutched onto the view that it was in a very fortunate position to help towards upgrading and sharpening the skills of the Botswana youth through an educational process that would bring about a transformation of the society by creating an informed nation. LUCT purposefully stressed creativity and innovation as two key variables in this process; these variables would assist to imaginatively and resourcefully equip youth with leadership and entrepreneurship skills so that they may not only manage their own business outlets in a competent and efficient manner but to also handle all other aspects of the lives in a similar way (Yeoh 2010; QAAHE 2010). As far as LUCT was concerned, if it was able to provide these skills it would be contributing in a substantial manner towards the fulfillment of some of the pivotal goals that are enshrined in the Vision 2016 document.

When LUCT was officially launched in Gaborone Malaysia's (former) Minister of Higher Education Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said that this institution was making an important intervention on an international level. The Minister graciously placed LUCT's launch in a broader context by arguing that, "Education is another form of diplomacy and is a soft tool that can be used in complex nation-to-nation dealing." LUCT indeed forged ties between Malaysia and Botswana in a unique way and one that would take the relations between these two nation-states to a new level. It is assumed that as Malaysia's bona fide educational institution it envisaged that as an international player in the educational arena it would be playing a far greater role in international relations than any other social or political institution. Badawi (2004: 7) was confident in his official opening of LUCT on the 11th of October that the institution will play a meaningful role in the development of skilled human resources in particular and in educational affair in general. So far, it seems that LUCT has been on the path of employing 'education as a soft tool' that is not just strengthening the relations between these two nations but deepening it in a profound way. Elsewhere LUCT also partnered

with other institutions such as Curtin University of Technology in Australia and Anglia Ruskin University in Britain to further transform the educational arena through cooperative projects and programs (QAAHE 2010).

Now when one scans the various student testimonies that have been uploaded onto the institutions local website, it is observed that there are a range of praiseworthy platitudes and commendable complements that have been showered on the institution because of its innovative spirit that it infuses into its students. Two quotes of two students who shared their feelings about the institution would suffice: Martin Moroeng who was registered for an associate degree in creative multimedia studies stated that, "Studying at Lim Kok Wing University has been very inspiring. The vibrancy of the environment makes one want to be a part of it and do better. I have (been) growing into a more rounded person because I am more motivated and surrounded by a positive learning atmosphere." And Pearl Mokgatlhane who was a retail management student had this to say: "Limkokwing University has created a platform where I can explore my creative ability to the fullest. Not only that, the fun environment encourages one to explore their (sic) passion and talents. The campus overflows with a good spirit that is instilled amongst each student and propels us to become better people." These positive and creditable comments surely stand the institution in good stead despite some of the flack and criticisms that the institution received from Batswana in certain quarters between 2008 and 2010 when it was still finding its feet in Botswana. At one stage Gail Phung, the Senior Vice President of Corporate and Faculty Development, asked: "Why do Batswana hate us so much?' in response to the manner the university staff have been treated; this was further inflamed after a police raid on campus (Pitse 2009). In spite of this event and other criticisms that appeared in the local print media such as *Mmegi*, the institution shouldered on to clear its name and to continue with its educational business.

The question that comes to mind is: what makes this institution stand out compared to the others that are operating in Botswana? To answer this question attention should briefly be turned to what is on offer at LUCT. It has a unique set

of programmes and since its inception in 1991 it worked closely with the industry; and through this partnership it designed and developed courses that were practically oriented and that assisted the student to find creative ways of making him/herself pulled into the industry without much difficulty. Since the industry covers a broad range of opportunities, the institution tailored courses that permitted the student to pursue the course at various levels; for example, a student may complete at the Foundation, Diploma, Degree, Masters, DBA, or Phd level. These courses are located in one of six faculties and they include, inter alia, Design Innovation, Multimedia Creativity, Communication, Media and Broadcasting, Information Technology and Computing, and Business Management and Globalization and Architecture & Built Environment. All of its courses have been given accreditation by Botswana's TEC and the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and a host of other recognized bodies.

The reason for LUCT's success may be attributed, on the one hand, to the founder, namely Tan Sri Lim Kok Wing's philosophy that underpinned the way it operates (throughout the world). He advocated a philosophy of bringing the best of what was found in the East and the West respectively and inserted these into a Global Empowerment programme initiative; as a result of the merger of best practices and the positive elements of the cultures from the East and West, LUCT has attracted the attention of the developing world's governments. And, on the other hand, Yeoh (2010) averred that it may be attributed to its new education model that combines industry capability with the academia; this combination thus facilitates a shift from formal textbook learning to an apprenticeship based education. In closing Yeoh (2010) argued that LUCT's innovative strategies may contribute effectively through its apprenticeship programme towards a radical reorganization of the present educational system. This is something that remains to be seen, however. So far LUCT has proven that the programmes that appear on its educational menus have helped to initiate important educational changes in those societies that it serves.

CONCLUSION

The essay reflected through a histroical lens upon Malaysia's relationship with Southern African nation-states and it did so by specifically focusing upon Malaysia's educational interventions. What this all meant in terms of international relations was that bilateral relations was forged through educational cooperation; an aspect that has, at times, not been adequately valued and appreciated. Nevertheless, the essay first analyzed 'partnership' as a viable conceptual tool within the educational sector and it examined the partnerships that were struck between Malaysia's tertiary institutions and those in Southern Africa. It first scrutinized IIUM's partnership with a South African private Muslim community based college, namely IPSA. The partnership that evolved and that developed, in spite of the new South African Higher Education Act restrictions that came into force, demonstrated what can be done and what was achieved within the short space of time; in other words, it showed that if communities and tertiary institutions are permitted the latitudinal space in which to pursue particular goals then all parties and communities would benefit equally. Whilst the MoU between IIUM and IPSA played itself out through the joint MCL degree programme, members from the Cape Muslim community with DMDI's assistance demonstrated on another level that partnerships can work if individuals and organizations are provided the necessary moral and financial support. The Bahasa Melayu intensive language course is a good example of how the local community gained and lessons were learnt as to how this can be taken forward in the future.

The essay then went on to focus on another form of educational intervention; this time it concentrated on the inputs of Lim Kok Wing University of Creative Technology; an institution that - under Tan Sri Lik Kok Wing's leadership – realized the need to go along with the process of globalization and market itself internationally. It therefore opted to establish campuses in different parts of the world and it targeted African nation-states such as Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland where LUCT was able to grow and contribute educationally. Even though LUCT has only been around in Southern Africa for about seven years, it has made an indelible mark – despite its

shortcomings - through its creative and innovative skills oriented programmes. The diverse educational menu that it mounted has lured many African youth and they, in turn, expressed a great deal of satisfaction with what they completed at LUCT. In this case, it proved that the internationalization of programmes benefits communities and the institutions in multiple ways. As said, though still a young programme in Southern Africa LUCT is bound to impact upon developments in the years ahead. LUCT's imaginative programmes have, as expected and perhaps correctly so, sometimes not been fully appreciated by others who have questioned the programmes' academic quality and their output.

Be that as it may, these educational experiments and developments should not be ignored or overlooked but be carefully monitored and assessed so that everyone may learn from the shortcomings and build on their strengths with the hope that everyone may in the end benefit. And one of the ways of doing this is to bring about changes through the creation of even-handed partnerships – a critical and key conceptual tool - at different levels; in this regard the Malaysian model adopted by LUCT and considered by IIUM seemed to have succeeded and made an impact.

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Muhammed Haron*
PB UB 0703
Department of Theology & Religious Studies
Faculty of Humanities
University of Botswana
Gaborone
0001
BOTSWANA

*Corresponding author; email: HARONM@mopipi.ub.bw