

**Academics for Higher Education and Development
(AHED)**

I. About AHED

1. History

AHED is a bi-lingual NGO based in Montreal, incorporated in 2007, and granted Canadian and Quebec charitable status in 2008. An unpaid Executive Director and a part time staff run its daily operations. The Executive Director is assisted by Supporters of the organization, Representatives at Canadian colleges and universities, the Board of Directors, and a distinguished Advisory Council. The list of Board and Advisory Council members, Supporters and Representatives can be found on **AHED's** web site at www.ahed-upesed.org.

2. Millennium Goals

In September 2000, 189 governments signed the Millennium Declaration committing themselves towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The central objective of the Goals is to improve levels of human development throughout the developing world, including improvements in nutrition, health, the environment, universal primary education, and gender equity. If the Millennium Development Goals are to be met, large numbers of citizens in the developing world need a university or college education in many academic and professional disciplines.

3. Mission

AHED's mission is to support developing countries in building capacity in higher education. Strong universities and colleges are key institutions in society needed to educate leaders and professionals to improve the levels of human development, the central objective of the Millennium Development Goals. Ethiopia, a country with 80 million citizens, has only 1500 doctors; Rwanda with 9 million inhabitants has only 250. In Ghana, there is no doctoral program in computer sciences or information technology. This means that Ghana can only provide training in these disciplines at the undergraduate level and must send its students in computer science and information technology abroad for more advanced education. The problem is that many of them stay abroad. This means that Ghana does not have sufficient expertise to develop information systems essential to support goals such as improved health and education. To ensure that capacity development is relevant and sustainable, **AHED's** approach is to provide volunteers to support projects initiated by colleges, universities, and ministries of higher education in developing countries. **AHED's** volunteers consist of working and retired professionals and faculty, staff, and

administrators from universities and colleges in developed countries, who offer developing world college and university faculty, administrators, and staff expertise on matters relevant to improving the quality of their institutions.

II. Partners and Projects

1. Partners

AHED has formed partnerships with several NGOs, including l'Agence universitaire de la francophonie (AUF), and the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC). **AHED** also has partnerships with a number of Canadian universities and colleges and their constituent faculties, schools, departments, centres, and institutes. In addition, it has entered into partnership with UNESCO to work with it in support of the UNESCO Chairs Programme.

2. Completed, Current, and Future Projects

AHED has completed two projects at the University of Liberia (UL),

Liberia has recently gone through two devastating civil wars and is now trying to put itself back together. UL before the civil war had 1400 faculty members; it is now down to 370. Many of the young people from the militias that fought in the civil war have flooded into UL. Enrollment, which is now open, has burgeoned from 9500 before the civil war to over 16,000 today. UL does not have an internet connect, laboratories, or even a full time faculty member to teach mathematics. It is hardly in a position to educate the doctors, engineers, teachers, nurses, agronomists etc. that Liberia needs for its development.

AHED has begun to work with UL to support efforts to rebuild the institution. At the request of the president of UL, Dr. Emmet Dennis, **AHED** sent two consultants to UL who did five year, senior management, and visiting academic plans for the University. The consultation identified as UL's most pressing need a report on the IT needs of the University. There is no internet connection and hardly any computers on campus. **AHED** sent an IT consultant to the University of Liberia to do an assessment of the IT needs of the University. Both of these projects are funded by the McCall – MacBain Foundation. **AHED** is committed to work with UL over the next several years to provide it with a range of visiting academics to help it get back in its feet so that it can provide Liberia with the agronomists, doctors, engineers, information technologists, etc that it needs to rebuild.

AHED is involved in an on-going project in Indonesia.

It has sent a volunteer, Marion Steff, to work for a year with the Centre for Disabilities Studies and Services at the State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The University is a leader in Indonesia in providing disabled students with access to higher education. Currently, the Centre for Disabilities is only able to accommodate blind students. One of Marion's tasks is to support the Centre in

providing services for a greater range of disabled students to make it more inclusive. Another of Marion's tasks is to work with the Centre to publicize its work in Indonesia so that it can serve as a model for other institutions of higher education and that it can show how the disabled can play a useful role in Indonesian society.

AHED has a planned project for this summer in Liberia.

AHED is mounting a workshop in the summer of 2010 on science education at the University of Liberia. One of the interesting topics in workshop is the illustration of how to do experiments for teaching science using materials that can be purchased locally in developing countries. This is especially important for countries that do not have the funds to purchase laboratory equipment or the technicians to maintain it.

AHED has a number of projects under consideration.

It is working to find volunteers to assist in establishing the first doctoral program in computer and information sciences in Ghana at the University of Cape Coast in Cape Coast, Ghana. In addition, it has projects in the planning stages in partnership with the faculties of medicine at the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario, which are working respectively with Faculty of Medicine at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia and with the Faculty of Medicine at the National University of Rwanda in Butare, Rwanda. In the near future, **AHED** will be applying to the Canadian International Development Agency's Voluntary Sector Fund to support the project with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine. In addition, **AHED** is also working on a possible project with the Registrar's Office at the National University of Rwanda. Lastly, **AHED** has applied for funds for a summer school at the University of Liberia. These are only some of **AHED's** planned projects.

AHED has also put out a Call for Proposals for which has committed \$10,000 towards expenses. The winning proposal will be selected in the spring of 2010. **AHED** plans to send out a Call for Proposals each year.

AHED works on its own and in cooperation with its partners in mounting its projects. **AHED** invites suggestions for projects. It also encourages academics, including staff, faculty, and administrators, both working and retired, to sign up as volunteers. For more information about **AHED's** projects and to sign up as a volunteer, see its web site at www.ahed-upesed.org

For further information about **AHED**, contact Steven Davis, **AHED's** Executive Director, at sdavis@ahed-upesed.org.