

## **Kennedy King and Pravina King demystify China's economic success**

*By Samuel Apondi and Easter Okello*

Professor Kenneth King and Pravina King presented a paper at an IDS development research seminar entitled “China-Africa Cooperation in Higher Education: New Kinds of Partnerships in Kenya?”

Kenneth and Pravina have been studying China's aid and soft power in Africa for eight years and have been looking particularly at Kenya, Ethiopia and South Africa, as case studies.

The paper presented by Kennedy King and Pravina King tries to demystify the issue of China's economic success and entry onto the world stage. It clearly illustrates that the country is gradually and firmly establishing as a force to be reckoned with, in economic terms.

A realization is drawn in the idea that the country uses soft power diplomacy to attain what it wants by attracting and persuading the Kenyan government to adopt its goals through cultural influence and financial aid.

Notable during the workshop was that in the recent years, China has made concerted efforts to establish a soft power presence throughout the world, and specifically in Africa.

It uses cultural influence through education cooperation in what is referred to as Confucius institution in Africa. The Confucius Institutes (CIs) are tasked with disseminating China's culture and language to the world.

China's race for resources is noted through involvement in a number of development projects in Kenya. A deeper human

resource development connection is also seen to have been established. However, a comparison done illustrating the India's apprenticeship approach to training and skill transfer to the Kenyan poor and China's reciprocity approach is done and it is noted that China has yet to develop a comprehensive, coherent, national soft-power strategy, to match the reciprocity claim. Kennedy King's presentation draws insight to a myriad interesting research topics concerning China's cultural and developmental infiltration into Kenya.

Kenneth is an emeritus professor of the University of Edinburgh while Pravina was the administrator of Edinburgh University's Centre of African Studies for 15 years.

Kenneth formerly taught history at the University of Nairobi and is the author of several books on Kenya, including, *The African Artisan* and *Jua Kali Kenya*

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