

Media Monitoring: Extract of Press News on Higher Education in Africa

1. University World News

Building scientific capacity – A regional turning point (Africa)

The future of Africa will be shaped by two dynamics. First, how well its leaders prepare for the fastest population growth rate in the world. And second, how well they do in creating the right opportunities for its young citizens. Africa is projected to become home to 1.7 billion people with more than half of that population under the age of 15 by 2030. Although it is a huge challenge, it offers an immense opportunity for the region. Most economies across the globe are becoming increasingly technology-based and digital. For example, through ICT tools (artificial intelligence and machine learning), efficiency and productivity are greatly enhanced and services improved across various sectors. How is Sub-Saharan Africa keeping up with these technological advances and leveraging them for its development transformation? Although there are pockets of success, more needs to be done. The quality and relevance of higher education across the African continent needs to improve to inspire creativity, innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, particularly in the applied sciences, engineering and technology fields. This challenge is daunting and requires a collective effort led by African leaders. The Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (RSIF), which is implemented under the Partnership for Skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (PASET), is an example of such an initiative. Led by African governments, it is designed to offer competitive PhD scholarships to some of the brightest young scholars on the continent to undertake applied scientific research in several thematic areas in select African universities, and to provide them with the opportunity to participate in a 'sandwich programme' in an institution abroad. These scholars are expected to develop new knowledge, innovative products and processes and adapt existing technology in solving critical development challenges, while also acquiring leadership skills. This summer, the first cohort of 16 scholars from eight countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have enrolled in the programme. Four of them are women.

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2. University World News

New coding initiative to boost graduate employability (Africa)

African universities are set to become the 'primary drivers' of the Coding for Employment Program (CEP), which aims to prepare the continent's youth for jobs of the future by empowering them to take the lead in the digital revolution. "The role of the CEP initiative cannot be overemphasised; it is a 'motivator' for innovation and invention," said Nigerian information and communications technology (ICT) expert Odinakachi Nwafor, who is programme assistant at Pradigm Initiative, a social enterprise that connects underserved youth with ICT opportunities. Nwafor told University World News African universities are the primary drivers for the CEP initiative. "In fighting university graduate unemployment in Africa, the CEP is a strategic tool. It provides decent self-employment for graduate unemployed youth," said Nwafor. He said as a direct result of the CEP initiative African universities would produce graduates with high problem-solving and innovative skills. "African universities should include the CEP in their curriculum as part of entrepreneurship skill development studies," Nwafor said. Echoing these sentiments, Ghada Khalifa, director of Microsoft Philanthropies for the Middle East

and Africa, said CEP has the potential to help keep African universities relevant to the 21st century, so that graduates seeking employment in the fourth industrial revolution are on a par with similar institutions around the world. The CEP initiative, managed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) in cooperation with the Rockefeller Foundation, Microsoft and Facebook, was announced at the Africa Innovation Summit 2018 held under the theme “Addressing Africa's Challenges” in Kigali, Rwanda, from 6-8 June, according to the AfDB website. Coding is at the centre of the African Development Bank’s Jobs for Youth in Africa initiative, which aims to equip 50 million youth with employable skills and create 25 million jobs by 2025 in agriculture, ICT and other key industries across Africa. Khalifa acknowledged that the world is changing in the digital age and that the fourth industrial revolution is going to bring new career opportunities – in fact, many students today will end up working in jobs that don’t exist yet. “The demand for digitisation across all sectors has never been greater,” Khalifa said. Click this [Link](#) for more details

3. Quartz Media

Foreign doctorates are attractive—but don’t write off home-grown PhDs (South Africa)

Introducing more skilled employees into the economy is an important path to development for many middle income countries. That’s why increased and improved training at the top end of the education level – PhDs – is considered so vital. Many countries encourage students to pursue their PhDs abroad in nations with well ranked universities, particularly in Europe and North America, on the presumption that what’s offered in the developed world is better quality. They know that some of those students won’t return after graduating, but take the risk since they believe those who do return will bring with them the necessary qualities for future growth. But until now there’s been little concrete evidence that would allow one to judge whether this is an effective approach. Does encouraging students to obtain their PhDs elsewhere improve the quality or quantity of scientific output in their home country? Our recent research sought to address this gap. In our study, we found that an individual who goes abroad to do a PhD and returns to his or her home country – South Africa in this case – has a more productive academic career than an individual who does his or her advanced schooling in South Africa. There are at least two possible sources of advantage. First, it could simply be that better students are selected to enter foreign PhD programmes. If that’s the case, these people would have better careers regardless of their alma mater. Second, foreign programmes might provide superior training to those offered in South Africa. That would mean it’s the foreign aspect of the PhD that drives higher performance later in someone’s career. The data we used in this study allowed us to separate the selection from the training effects, so we could identify the source of future performance.

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4. University World News

New body to regulate all higher education institutions (Ghana)

The country’s national cabinet has approved the establishment of the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, which will regulate all tertiary institutions and help to speed up the establishment of qualifying private universities, according to President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. He was speaking on the occasion of the graduation ceremony on 23 June of Ashesi University, a private higher education institution which received its university charter from the president in May this year. In terms of the charter, the university is now a full university and can award its own degrees. Previously, the

university was affiliated to the University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana and its graduates were awarded a UCC degree. Akufo-Addo said the new commission would provide regulations which will mean all universities, public and private alike, will be treated fairly and equally. The regulations would also expedite the processing of deserving applications for presidential charters by private universities, which should take no more than four years to acquire. “The six-year wait of Ashesi will be a thing of the past. Government is taking steps to accelerate the granting of presidential charters to other private universities because of their contribution to education and learning in the country,” he said. Akufo-Addo told the graduating class that “an Ashesi degree should stand for something distinctive, and it should be different from other degrees. The surroundings in which you have been taught and the way you have been taught should help to present the products of this institution as distinguishable from those of other universities.”

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5. University World News

[The link between student mobility and employability \(Ethiopia\)](#)

Employability is currently a buzzword in many conversations as institutional, national, regional and international organisations frantically gear up to respond to the ominous realities of youth bulge, ‘mass’ enrolment and graduate unemployment. Everywhere, the explosive growth of the number of graduates is resulting in massive challenges, with implications for their academic preparation. For those who can afford or get the opportunity to do so, studying in another country is perceived as a mechanism to improve one’s employability. This has become one of the major pull factors in student mobility. In addition to its positive impact on academic development, international study offers enhanced opportunities for employability, providing a variety of advantages, including linguistic improvement, personal development, cultural experience, global awareness and marketable skills. While student mobility has received much attention as one dimension of internationalisation, studies related to the link between internationalisation and employability, particularly on the perceptions and expectations of international students, remain inconclusive. This is specifically true in the context of Africa. This article reports the findings of a larger study conducted on international students from Ethiopia to gauge their views on the impact of their training on employability. Despite the lack of reliable statistical data on the subject, thousands of Ethiopian students are believed to be studying outside the country. Mobility through government scholarships or arranged with the help of family or individually appears to be on the rise. Yet, there is little information on mobility patterns, purpose and possible plans. In addition to featuring their educational profiles, the study aimed to explore the perspectives of Ethiopian students on the link between study abroad and employability by examining such factors as motivations for studying abroad, employability attributes and their mastery and students’ plans after graduation.

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6. The Standard

[Moi University in stalemate over closure of constituent colleges \(Kenya\)](#)

Controversy over the transfer of students from a constituent college of Moi University has deepened further after students received a second memo ordering the college shut, and their relocation to the university’s main campus. In a memo dated June, 28, 2018 from the university’s Vice Chancellor seen

by Sunday Standard, the students from Odera Akango in Siaya and Kitale campuses are required to relocate to the main campus and Eldoret West campus in a week. In the memo, the VC said the move had been occasioned by lack of teaching due to non-payment of lecturers. Stakeholders and leaders from the community, however, claim the university management has told them that the students had requested for a transfer. “We are already complying with the entire requirement as per the commission of university to the campus. We had a meeting with the management and we all agreed that the students would not be moved,” said Prof Luke Othuon, a stakeholder of Odera Akango college campus. More than 500 students in the department of Education, Arts and Social Sciences, Business and Economics and Information Science have been affected by the sudden decision of the Moi University management. This comes barely a month after the university management gave its word to the county leadership and several other leaders from the county that there would be no transfer as per the first memo two months ago over the same. Leaders and stakeholders are now accusing the management of for not honouring the agreement between them during a meeting on April 23, 2018. Click this [Link](#) for more details

7. University World News

[The higher education landscape is changing fast \(Global\)](#)

The landscape of higher education globally continues to shift remarkably. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 1970 there were 32.6 million students enrolled in higher education institutions compared to 99.9 million in 2000. This represents an increase of 206% over this period. Although there are signs that enrolments in higher education around the globe are slowing down (in part influenced by a declining youth population and lower fertility rates), it is estimated that the number of enrolments will rise from 214.1 million in 2015 to 594.1 million by 2040. This growth would represent an increase of 281% over the 30 years from 2000 to 2030; the growth over the period from 2000 to 2030 is therefore likely to be higher than that experienced between 1970 and 2000. There is a geopolitical shift gradually taking place in higher education. Globally there were 1,255 students per 100,000 inhabitants in 1990, increasing to 1,625 by 2000 and then it continued to rise to 2,900 in 2015. In 2016, there was a slight decrease to 2,892 and it was the second year in about 20 that it declined. The other year in which there was a decline was in 2013, to 2,764 from 2,767 in 2012. On a regional basis, the Central and Eastern Europe region had the highest participation for many years and has plateaued, while the North America and Western Europe region regained the standing in 2016 that it had lost in recent years. Over the 10-year period between 2007 and 2016, the region that experienced the greatest growth was South and West Asia, which increased by 83% from 1,247 to 2,288 per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by East Asia and the Pacific, increasing by 41%, from 2,162 in 2007 to 3,053 in 2016. In 2016, the regions that had the greatest proportion of population in higher education (more than 4,000 students per 100,000 inhabitants) were Central and Eastern Europe, North America and Western Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, while Sub-Saharan Africa had the lowest (747 students per 100,000 inhabitants).

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8. University World News

Ongoing partnership helps engineers tackle local needs (Africa)

The United Kingdom's Royal Academy of Engineering is looking to team up with more Sub-Saharan African universities in a programme aimed at forging links between universities and the private sector. The Higher Education Partnerships in Sub-Saharan Africa programme (HEP SSA) is supported by the Anglo American Group Foundation and the UK government through the Global Challenges Research Fund established by the Royal Academy of Engineering in 2016. The programme aims to improve teaching quality, strengthen industry-academia partnership and create graduates that possess the skills needed for industry, said Sebastian Scott, programme manager for HEP SSA at the Royal Academy of Engineering. "It is widely accepted that engineering is a driver of economic development for any country and HEP SSA supports universities within Sub-Saharan Africa, not only to develop their own teaching capacity but to help train local African engineers to address challenges experienced in their own communities," Scott told University World News. The pilot scheme, Enriching Engineering Education, which ran from 2013-2015, made the University of Zimbabwe and the College of Engineering and Technology at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania 'hub' universities. The programme brought engineering curricula in universities in line with current industrial practice, and improved teaching practices in engineering through a structured partnership between universities and industry. Following the pilot, the University of Botswana, Moi University in Kenya, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Makerere in Uganda and Zimbabwe's National University of Science and Technology were selected as hubs in 2016. In 2017, the University of Malawi – the Polytechnic, University of Zambia, University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria and University of Namibia were selected as centres.

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9. University World News

President warns students not to expect free education (Malawi)

Malawi's President Professor Peter Mutharika has urged students to take advantage of the government's expanded student loan system, but not to expect free education. Speaking at the 19th graduation ceremony of the state-run Mzuzu University recently, Mutharika said: "Many of you are destined to succeed in this life. But success does not come for free. Success must always be fought for ... University education is one of the best treasures you can get. Use it well!" Mutharika said no one should fail to access university education because they are poor and that is the reason why his government had put in place a student loan scheme. He said the private sector can always play a critical role in financing university education if the right policy direction is in place. However, he said students must understand that higher education cannot be provided for free. "What we pay to universities through subvention is what the public contributes to education. Money paid from Treasury is taxpayers' money paid by Malawians, including those who did not get university education themselves. "Therefore, parents, guardians and students who have resources must always remember that it is primarily your responsibility to pay for your university education. The public funds are there only to support you, or to supplement you," he said. "This year, we have increased the budget allocation for student loans from MWK4 billion [US\$5.3 million] to MWK8 billion [US\$10.5 million] – a 100% increase because we want more needy students to access the loans. This facility remains a loan because the state cannot assume your responsibility to pay for your education. In short, repay your

loan when it matures!” He said his administration was building new universities such as Mombera University to improve access to higher education. The government was also building new infrastructure at almost all public institutions of higher learning such as Mzuzu University, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Chancellor College and The Polytechnic. He said most of the projects are being funded by local resources. Mutharika said his government has been successfully developing open, distance and e-learning as part of its skills development programme, hence people can now access university education on their mobile phones and laptops while at home. He said his government was delinking the University of Malawi for it to evolve into independent universities that can grow and accommodate as many Malawians as possible while operating on the basis of competition. Last year, Mutharika approved the splitting of the University of Malawi’s four constituent colleges into separate institutions – a move first mooted more than a decade ago. Click this [Link](#) for more details

10. Mail and Guardian

[Better standards and guidelines can bolster research literature reviews \(South Africa\)](#)

There is an enormous amount of academic research in the world. And the number is growing all the time. The volume of research articles doubles every nine years. In 2010 there were already estimated to be more than 50 million research papers on pretty much every subject imaginable (and some we’d struggle to imagine). In any one topic area there’s often so much research that people wanting to rapidly understand a subject and make a decision for policy or practice cannot read up on it comprehensively. This is one of the main reasons that researchers write literature reviews. They provide a summary of a complex, large evidence base in a way that can be quickly and easily understood. Some literature reviews act as introductions to a well understood topic. Some aim to summarise key theories that explain a phenomenon. Some try to comprehensively map what research has been done and how. Others aim to accurately and precisely summarise the impact of one factor on a specific outcome. In many cases reviewers try to be comprehensive or transparent so their work could be repeated by other scientists and their conclusions can be verified relative to the evidence they found. But there’s a problem. Reviewers might reach a conclusion that uses unreliable evidence or summarises the evidence in a way that isn’t as reliable as it could be. This might cause policymakers or practitioners to make an expensive or damaging decision.

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11. The Standard Media

[Lecturers threaten new strike over pay \(Kenya\)](#)

Lecturers have threatened to down their tools again if the Government fails to give universities the Sh10 billion meant for their pay rise. Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) secretary general Constantine Wasonga yesterday said he did not understand why the money had not been released to public universities. He asked Government to act on an audit by the Ministry of Education that revealed Sh10 billion workers' savings were missing from public universities' accounts. "We are not afraid of going back to strike, we are well-known for that. The Government should immediately release the money, failure to which we are going to issue a fresh strike notice," Wasonga said. Dr Wasonga asked the Education CS Amina Mohamed to hand the report to the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, Director of Public Prosecutions, Auditor General, Retirement of Benefits Authority and the Directorate

of Criminal Investigation for action. Wasonga accused public universities of failing to meet their statutory obligations to the Kenya Revenue Authority, National Social Security Fund, National Hospital Insurance Fund and the Retirement Benefit Scheme as well as the cooperative societies. "The audit vindicates UASU. All along, the union has been saying financial mismanagement is rampant in our public universities and this has effected the welfare of academic staff," he said. Wasonga claimed some of the retired academic staff members were unable to get their pension. UASU also opposed plans by Government to compel them to contribute to the National Housing Development Fund.

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12. University World News

[Overcrowded universities fail to reduce student intake \(Nigeria\)](#)

An informal survey by University World News reveals that a 2017 directive from the National Universities Commission of Nigeria that mandated each university to admit a maximum of 50 students for each undergraduate course per year has long been abandoned. After the 2017 Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board examinations, the National Universities Commission (NUC) stated that due to limited slots for admission, Nigerian universities could only accommodate about 30% of the 1.7 million candidates who took the examination. But federal and state-owned universities that draw their budgetary allocations from the government jettisoned the 50-student limit directive and have gone ahead and admitted a greater number. At Benue State University, the state government asked the university management to improve on its internally generated revenue so it is currently admitting more students than it can handle and making it very difficult for students to learn. "The school management has not only increased our fees but has also admitted so many students that we now stand in and around the lecture halls to receive lectures. There are about 500 students in my class and during most lectures you can barely hear what the lecturers are saying," said Hembe Moses, a 200-level mass communication student. According to Moses, whenever they have lectures with other departments you will find an average of 2,000 students crammed into a hall with a 500-student capacity. At Nasarawa State University, the situation is no better. A glance at the number of 100-level students in different faculties shows that the faculty of education has over 3,000 students. Although students are shared across all six departments in the faculty, they are required to congregate in one place to take mandatory general classes. In the faculty of social sciences, where there are 2,000 100-level students, the situation is similar, while the faculty of natural and applied sciences has 750 students. At the University of Abuja, the department of agriculture has over 650 students at 200 level and the economics department has over 550 students at 400 level and 600 students at 100 level.

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13. Daily Nation

[University of Nairobi rolls out course work programme for PhD students \(Kenya\)](#)

Doctorate students taking communication studies at the University of Nairobi (UoN) will from September be required to take course work for at least one-and-a-half academic years before doing research as per the new rules by the Commission for University Education (CUE). The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is the first department at the university to have its taught doctorate programme's curriculum approved. All Universities across the country were supposed to come up with the programmes and have them approved by their senates and CUE by the end of last

year. Doctorate students taking communication studies at the University of Nairobi (UoN) will from September be required to take course work for at least one-and-a-half academic years before doing research as per the new rules by the Commission for University Education (CUE). The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is the first department at the university to have its taught doctorate programme's curriculum approved. All Universities across the country were supposed to come up with the programmes and have them approved by their senates and CUE by the end of last year.

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14. The Standard Media

[Private university opens its doors to diploma students \(Kenya\)](#)

A private university has responded to the call by Ministry of Education to absorb more middle-level students and promote research in higher education. With the number of students scoring the minimum university entry grade of C+ diminishing, a growing need is created to take in the remaining lot left out by university admission. Of the 606,394 students who sat KCSE last year, only 62,851 attained the minimum university entry requirement of C+. Some 100,906 students scored C plain and C- in last year's examinations and are eligible for diploma courses. However, only 26,866 students applied to join diploma institutions against an available capacity of 54,927 across the 71 institutions. Education Cabinet Secretary Amina Mohammed said a total of 500,000 students who sat last year's exams must be admitted to diploma and certificate courses. The Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) last week opened its portal for diploma and certificate applications. The authority is targeting students who did not make it to universities and wish to be admitted to national polytechnics and technical training institutes (TTIs). However, in her rallying call, Amina invited more institutions to take part in shaping middle-level training and secure a future for the huge number of students. "I urge more of you to join in supporting access to tertiary education," Amina said last month.

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