1. University World News

**Training to promote thought leadership in universities (Africa)**

A four-year leadership training programme aimed at vice-chancellors, principals and deans of 54 African universities has proved popular among university leaders and a third phase is planned, according to its organisers. Participants of the Capacity Strengthening Programme for Leadership in African Universities, funded by the Mastercard Foundation and implemented jointly by the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), said the training had helped them to reflect more deeply on their characteristics and effectiveness as leaders. “African universities need to recognise that there is no replacement for thought leadership as innovation and advancement at universities is dependent on the quality of its leadership,” said Dr Anthony Egeru, RUFORUM’s acting deputy executive secretary for programme development and implementation. According to Egeru, for Africa to have quality universities, there must be quality leadership. “Thus a deliberate training approach and immersion programmes in African universities should be started, and those that exist need to be further strengthened at university level,” Egeru told University World News.

Egeru said for a long time universities had been viewed as places for developing great ideas. “However, they have not been able to earn credibility as places for turning ideas into actionable solutions, which would help them create avenues for influencing societies, government and the global environment.” Based on the feedback from a survey received in June, university leaders believe there is also a need to train university council members as this could help improve relationships between the universities’ governing councils and management. “They need to come together and make joint decisions to improve service delivery in both the academic and administrative fields,” Egeru said. In the survey, leaders reported that the training had enabled them to better rally stakeholders to share their vision and had helped to improve standards in teaching and examination administration, to motivate research leaders and to enhance leadership capacity at lower levels.

The leadership initiative had its roots in a meeting of university vice-chancellors held in Cape Town, South Africa, four years ago. A number of issues facing university leadership were identified in search of a pathway to achieving the goals of the First African Higher Education Summit held in 2015 in Senegal, requiring African higher education institutions to commit themselves to excellence in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, public service and the provision of solutions to development challenges and opportunities. “Leadership in our universities needs to respond to and be proactive about both internal and complex issues and partnerships and the external drives including problems such as climate change, mass migrations and the rapidly changing technologies and cultures,” said Professor Tade Aina, PASGR executive director and a mastermind of the initiative. “We started this initiative based on the need for strategic management of complex organisations ... seeing universities as complex systems in fast-changing times,” said Aina. According to Dr Beatrice Muganda, director of higher education at PASGR, issues identified by vice-chancellors at the Cape Town meeting included resource mobilisation, management of spiralling enrolments, aging professoriates, the challenge of forming and sustaining partnerships, and managing conflict.

RUFORUM Executive Secretary Professor Adipala Ekweamu said the programme was designed to enable university leaders to “champion transformation of African universities into effective research and training institutions with strong frameworks and mechanisms for implementation of the vision and mission of their universities”. Ekweamu said the basis of the leadership initiative was to enable people to “examine their own potential; their strengths and weaknesses and how they can be strengthened”. According to RUFORUM and PASGR, the Mastercard-funded training has been critical in providing an avenue for dialogue and feedback from principals, deans and vice-chancellors.
“The deans acknowledge that leading from the middle is quite challenging and their voices are often not heard in the right places or at the right time,” says Muganda. “This often leads to a time lag in translating ideas into actions.”

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2. University World News

Why are states slow to ratify the Addis Ababa Convention? (Africa)

Nearly five years after its adoption and despite the many benefits it offers, only seven out of 55 African countries have ratified the Addis Ababa Convention which puts in place a framework for the recognition of academic qualifications throughout the continent. Dr Saba Bokhari, education specialist at UNESCO’s Regional Office for Eastern Africa, urged delegates at last month’s HEFAALA symposium, fittingly also held in Addis Ababa, to encourage their governments to ratify the convention. “Academics appear to be more interested in the convention than the political forces but even then, some say they do not even know about it,” she said.

This is despite frequent reminders by UNESCO and continental higher education bodies pushing for its ratification. For example, at the close of the Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of African Universities (COREVIPA) hosted by the Association of African Universities in Cairo in July, the final communiqué called on host governments to ratify the Addis Ababa Convention, “in the spirit of the recent ratification of the African [Continental] Free Trade Area, as well as leverage international mobility mechanisms such as the European Union initiatives and inter-institutional joint degree programmes, in a manner that strategically benefits Africa”. The Addis Convention, the full name of which is the Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States, was adopted in the Ethiopian capital in December 2014. Building upon the foundations of the Arusha Convention of 1981, it creates a binding agreement around the norms and standards for formal procedures recognising foreign higher education qualifications and those giving access to higher education institutions in Africa. It puts paid to the need for bilateral agreements between countries over the recognition of the qualifications of refugees and other migrants. It is widely seen to complement the African Union’s developmental goals contained in Agenda 2063 and as having the power to build multilateralism and international cooperation, as well as ensure credible and reliable recognition of qualifications. Other benefits include improving employability of graduates, internationalisation of higher education programmes, and boosting student and faculty mobility. The seven countries that have ratified the agreement so far are Togo, the Gambia, Congo, Djibouti, Mauritius, Senegal and Mauritania. The convention comes into force only once 10 member states ratify it. Bokhari said contrary to popular belief, there were no costs attached to the implementation of the convention by a ratifying country. As a follow-up to Bokhari’s presentation, University World News interviewed Saidou Sireh Jallow, officer in charge and UNESCO representative at the Juba office in South Sudan, asking him to explain why ratification was taking so long.

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3. University World News

Defining internationalisation – Intention versus coercion (Africa-Global)

Many authorities have aspired to provide an all-encompassing definition for the complex term ‘internationalisation’ as it relates to higher education. The attempt at such a definition by Professor Hans de Wit* and his colleague Fiona Hunter (2015) falls short in capturing reality, particularly in the Global South. At the joint St Mary’s University’s 17th Conference and the second Higher Education Forum for Africa, Asia and Latin America (HEFAALA) symposium of the International Network for Higher Education in Africa held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 25 to 27 July 2019, De Wit, who is director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College in the United States, expounded a definition of internationalisation which
spurred considerable debate. According to De Wit and Hunter (2015), internationalisation of higher education is defined as “the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society”. I maintain that internationalisation as regards the Global South, particularly Africa, is far from being an intentional process. In an edited book entitled African Higher Education in the International Dimension, published over a decade ago now, I argued that African higher education is the most internationalised system in the world – not by participation but by omission. “As the weakest global higher education system, it relies heavily on the discourses, paradigms and parameters set by others, rendering it vulnerable to global whims and idiosyncrasies. African higher education assumes the position of the most internationalised systems by being the least internationally engaged.” Africa produces a fraction of the world’s global knowledge – and the most generous statistics put such contribution at 2%. In so doing, the continent relies heavily on the knowledge produced by others. The rest of the Global South also falls into this unenviable category. Most books, journals, databases, and information and data are produced in the Global North. Even the format and style of intellectual writings and academic communication refer to institutions in the north – American Psychological Association (APA), Harvard Style, Modern Language Association (of America) – demanding that every college student from virtually anywhere in the world follows these international norms. Thus I argue that, in participating in the massive consumption of these products and services while staunchly, but helplessly, adhering to the international academic and scholastic norms and values, universities in the Global South are not willing parties. Neither is the process of consumption by them intentional. For an institution to be more globally visible or, better still, globally appealing, it ought to raise its profile through a number of intentional activities rather than through coercion or under duress. Institutional partnerships are often sought among equals and this means that institutions maintain a certain level of international standing through a multitude of relevant activities – intentional or otherwise. The increasingly popular, but frequently criticised, institutional rankings, which invariably favour the Global North, have pushed the internationalisation pendulum from intention to coercion. For instance, institutions around the world – including those in Africa – are known to hire companies increasingly to raise their standing in the rankings. This author has once advised a major African university to de-commission such an exercise which would cost substantial fees. Read more here

4. University World News

Fees freeze and inflation put universities under pressure (Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe’s universities are choking under a blanket undergraduate fees freeze imposed by the government as the country struggles with inflation of over 175%. The government has said there will be no fee hike until new student payments modalities have been worked out. Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development Minister Professor Amon Murwira said: “All fees to do with undergraduate studies have not been increased as such communication passes through my office. I have not signed an ordinance to that effect. “Fees remain the same until we put [in place] alternative payment methods as currently we are working on introducing grants. As for the undergraduates, there is no compromise except for postgraduate; there is that leverage since it is optional.” A student loan scheme introduced last year has been rendered moribund as most students have failed to utilise it as financial institutions are demanding collateral which most students, parents and guardians are failing to secure in a country where unemployment is up to 90%. Since last year, government has been preventing universities from increasing fees at the beginning of each semester even though inflation is rising. Before ex-president Robert Mugabe was ousted in October 2017 and succeeded by Emmerson Mnangagwa, inflation was below 5%. By June this year, it stood at 176% and Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube banned the publication of inflation statistics for the next six months. Such a move has
done nothing to spare universities from the effects of hyperinflation. Midlands State University hiked fees from about US$800 to US$2,000 per semester, but was forced to climb down due to the government’s directive. Lupane State University, hit by a lecturers’ strike, has been forced to suspend some programmes. Zimbabwe National Students Union Secretary General Ashley Pfunye said both students and universities are victims of the government’s policies and the solution lies in pressuring the authorities to turn around the country’s economy. “The question is really about the economy and both the students and university administrations must put pressure on the central government to direct more funds to the education system. Increasing fees depending on inflation will not help institutions endure the semester. Energy must not be directed to solving the manifestations of the problem but must be channelled towards dealing with the root cause which is system failure,” said Pfunye. He said on the students’ loans scheme, the union is dismayed by the way government is taking the students for a ride as they are unable to access loans due to stringent conditions.

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5. University World News
Reform results in drop in university candidate numbers (Senegal)
Problems have surfaced in Senegal following the introduction of a new education system for schools in 2013, which has led to a deterioration in students’ results – with the pass rate of the baccalauréat school-leaving examination, which gives successful candidates the right to higher education, only reaching 37% this year, compared with nearly 50% under the old system. During the past 18 years the education system has undergone two major reforms, reported Sud Quotidien of Dakar. First, in 2001 the PDEF (Programme Décennal de l’Éducation et de la Formation) was introduced, but following an evaluation the authorities judged this had too many limitations to provide a high enough standard of education – even if its widened access for children at all levels of the education system produced acceptable results, reported Sud Quotidien. The PDEF was replaced in 2013 by the PAQUET-EF (Programme d’Amélioration de la Qualité, de l’Équité et de la Transparence du secteur de l’Éducation et de la Formation), which aimed to build a system of education and training that was equitable and efficient and conformed to economic and social development needs, reported Sud Quotidien. But results under PAQUET have fallen. During the decade of the PDEF, the highest score for the baccalauréat was a pass rate of 48.8% in 2006 – a 13-point increase six years after its introduction. But this year, after six years of PAQUET, the pass rate was only 37% – compared with an official objective of 80% – limiting the numbers of school-leavers eligible for university. According to Cheikh Mbow, director of COSYDEP, a coalition of unions for the defence of public schools, it was not the students who were the problem, but the system. “The PAQUET has never achieved 40%, while we were nearly up to 50% with the PDEF,” he told Sud Quotidien
Read more here

6. University World News
Is Africa the future for recruiting international students? (Africa)
In June Akinwumi Adesina, president of the African Development Bank, delivered a statement at a meeting in Equatorial Guinea. He said: “Together and united, Africa will be unstoppable.” New African’s editor Baffour Ankomah recently wrote: “Africa’s vast oil and mineral reserves will prove to be a conduit for investments in infrastructure, improved healthcare and educational opportunities.” The statistics seem to back such statements up. In 2018, six of the 10 fastest growing economies worldwide were in Africa. Africa has the fastest-growing middle class in the world. Despite recent revised forecasts, the African economy is predicted to grow at a faster rate than many other regions. More than 1.2 billion people currently live in Africa. By 2030, the continent’s population is estimated to be 1.7 billion and 2.2 billion in 2050. Sixty per cent of the
African population (250 million people) are under the age of 25. Despite these statistics, less than 10% of Sub-Saharan African youth are enrolled in post-secondary education. Twenty years ago I was enjoying breakfast at the Le Meridien hotel in Dakar and realised that I was the only non-Chinese person in the room. China has invested heavily in Africa for decades and has continued investing through its Belt and Road Initiative. China’s African infrastructure projects include building educational infrastructure. For example, in July 2019 nine African universities signed agreements with several Chinese universities and think-tanks to conduct joint research projects and increase academic and student exchange programmes. China has overtaken the United States and the United Kingdom for the number of anglophone African students studying there. China is not the only country investing time, talent and resources in Africa. There are approximately 25,000 African students currently studying in 500 universities in India. However, according to a recent UNESCO report, an increasing number of African students are choosing to remain in Africa for post-secondary education. South Africa is the preferred destination. Living conditions in South Africa, along with favourable living costs and simplified visa regulations, are among the reasons for increased African enrolment in South African universities. In the report, educating the Masses: The rise of online education in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the author Stefan Trines, research editor for World Education News and Reviews, writes that Africa is “the most dynamic e-learning market on the planet”.

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7. University World News
Can libraries meet the new mandate of colleges of education? (Ghana)
Ghana’s quest to have quality teachers at the pre-tertiary level has led to various reforms in the teacher education sector. These include uplifting the status of the institutions involved in teacher training, changing their names from ‘colleges of education’ to ‘university colleges of education’, and requiring them to offer undergraduate academic programmes. In the past, the colleges of education were called ‘teacher training colleges’ and offered the two-year post-middle certificate ‘B’, and later the four-year post-middle certificate ‘A’. In 1978 a three-year post-secondary certificate ‘A’ was the product of another reform. The Education Act 2008, Act 847, upgraded the teacher training colleges to diploma-awarding institutions – offering courses leading to the award of a three-year diploma in basic education – and placed them under the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) which is responsible for the regulation of tertiary education institutions in Ghana. In September 2018 the government of Ghana upgraded colleges of education to university colleges of education which now requires them to offer four-year bachelor of education (BEd) degree programmes, thereby putting more pressure on existing resources, including libraries. The responsibility for training of pre-tertiary teachers in Ghana falls largely on the colleges, although the University of Education is also mandated to train pre-tertiary teachers. Currently, there are 46 public colleges of education in Ghana and three private institutions. The colleges are strategically located in the 16 regions in Ghana and every region has at least two colleges of education that train teachers to serve the needs of all the basic schools in that particular region and Ghana as a whole. Libraries are vital in the delivery of quality teacher education. Having a well-resourced library that complements academic programmes will contribute to the fulfilment of the mission of the colleges. Library resources and services that are sufficient in quality, depth, diversity and currency support quality teacher education. Libraries are instituted to collect vital information, preserve the recorded knowledge and offer them for quality education to serve the users, according to Nworie, Obinyan, Nworie and Irunegbo (2018). They also argue that libraries support teachers and students in learning, knowledge acquisition and research through the provision of information resources that cover pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and professional practice. Therefore libraries are vital components in the information dissemination chain of teacher education because they serve to expand access to up-to-date
information in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of skills, especially in the areas of information literacy, research and teaching skills for quality education.
Read more here

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8. University World News
**Late membership dues hamper regional university body (East Africa)**

Implementation of strategic operations of the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) are being hampered by late and non-remittance of contributions by East African Community (EAC) member states. The council received the second highest allocation in the 2019-20 budget from the EAC – US$9.5 million – after the Lake Victoria Basin Commission which received US$13.1 million. Overall, the EAC has been having problems financing its operations, mainly due to delayed contributions, a situation that has also affected its organs and institutions. As of June 2018, member countries cumulatively owed the regional higher education body up to US$17 million, according to media reports. Despite being owed millions – Burundi has the largest debt at over US$5 million, while Kenya owes the least at US$4,000 – the IUCEA says that its daily operations remained largely unaffected, but reckons that implementation of its strategic operations have been hampered by delayed remittances. Newer members of the economic bloc, Burundi and South Sudan, both failed to pay their fees last year. On the other hand, older founder members led by Kenya have shown the greater efforts in meeting their financial commitments. “We cannot execute our mandate as fully as we have planned; budget constraints mean we have to scale down activities now and again,” said Mike Kuria, IUCEA deputy executive secretary. “Our daily operations however remain largely unaffected, mainly because we are usually able to borrow from arrears as we wait for partner states’ contributions,” he said. Arrears are monies paid to offset arrears incurred in the past. If a country fails to pay this year, that balance becomes arrears next year, he said. According to Kuria, institutions of the EAC receive money directly from member states or from the EAC (after payment by the states) depending on the act of parliament that established them. In the case of the IUCEA, it receives money from states directly via ‘line’ ministries, but all budgets are approved by the EAC Council of Ministers and are later discussed and passed by the regional legislative arm of EAC, the East African Legislative Assembly. “Inevitably with this kind of accumulation of arrears, it means we are not able to implement our strategic plan as we would want to. We are forced to prioritise and re-strategise continuously,” Kuria told University World News. The IUCEA was financing a number of its ongoing programmes via donor funding, thanks to powers granted to it allowing it to enter into financial agreements with external partners. “As we are established by an Act of the East African Legislative Assembly, we are authorised to enter into agreements with donors and so we are able to mobilise resources from outside,” Kuria said. While partner states in recent years have been contributing less than 50% of what is expected, the budget for donor-funded projects actually went up, ensuring that implementation went on uninterrupted. Some of the donor-funded projects include the World Bank-supported African Centres of Excellence project, and the EAC scholarship programme funded by the German Development Bank, which will offer masters sponsorships in science, technology and engineering and mathematics. “We are also in partnerships with organisations such as the African Population and Health Research Centre, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and others to try to mobilise funds in support of our strategic objectives.”
Read more here

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9. University World News
**A new refugee law – Implications for higher education (Ethiopia)**

Owing to its geographical location, and the political instability and humanitarian crises in neighbouring countries, Ethiopia has become one of the largest refugee-hosting countries in the world and the second largest in Africa, providing refuge to close to 1 million refugees from some 24 countries. While the South
Sudanese are the largest group with a total of 422,240 refugees, Somalis number 253,889; Eritreans 173,879; and Sudanese 44,620. The urban-registered refugee population is also considerable, numbering close to 23,000 individuals, and includes those transferred from the refugee camps to cities on medical and protection grounds – refugees like the Yemeni with no designated camps, university students on sponsorship programmes and beneficiaries of the out-of-camp living scheme. According to available data 80% of the urban refugee population are represented by Eritreans, followed by Yemenis at 8.3%, Somalis at 4.7%, South Sudanese at 2.3% and the remaining 5.4% from the Great Lakes region. The country’s commitment to the protection of refugee rights has been exhibited through the various agreements and conventions as well as its hospitality to refugee populations. Until recently, refugee affairs in Ethiopia were administered through Refugee Proclamation No 409 of 2004 which put restrictions on moving out of camps, access to employment and education outside camps. A new refugee law that incorporates significant policy and legal reforms was ratified by parliament in January 2019. The new law gives refugees the right to engage in wage-earning employment; acquire and transfer property and assets under the same circumstance as “the most favourable treatment” accorded to foreign nationals; and waive them from any duty, charge or tax higher than that imposed on Ethiopian nationals. In addition to allowing refugees access to national health and education services on the same basis as Ethiopian nationals, the law gives them access to telecommunication, banking, financial and judicial services, identity and travel documentation and driver’s license certification. Similar to other foreign nationals, the new law further grants refugees or asylum seekers liberty of movement and freedom to choose their residence, which is expected to encourage a move away from the existing camp-based approach to “an integrated model of refugee assistance”. The right to integrate locally into Ethiopian society is, however, only restricted to refugees who have lived in Ethiopia for a very long period of time. The law also makes reference to the existing Nationality Law of Ethiopia which allows foreign nationals, including refugees, to acquire Ethiopian nationality by fulfilling the necessary requirements. The Ethiopian government was known for providing educational access to refugees, though most of these provisions have been offered mainly in refugee camps. However, opportunities at the higher education level have also been extended through the out-of-camp and UNHCR scholarships that offered the best opportunity for those wishing to attend universities. The support from the UNHCR, which has set higher education in its Education Strategy 2012-16 as one of its priorities, comes mainly through the worldwide Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) scholarship. The data for 2017 indicate that the majority of DAFI scholarships (41%) were given to 30 Sub-Saharan countries including Ethiopia which ranks top among the three largest country programmes. A total of 28 higher education institutions in Ethiopia host DAFI scholarship students with an annual budget of US$499,096, the average scholarship cost standing at $685 (UNHCR 2019). Among the 729 students enrolled in 2017 DAFI scholarships, 388 came from Somalia, 169 from Sudan, 88 from South Sudan, 63 from Eritrea, 13 from Yemen, seven from Congo Brazzaville, and one from Burundi (UNHCR 2018).