1. Digital Standard

**What you must do to ensure you’re earning PhD of the right quality (Kenya)**

It is now a notorious truism that there are good and bad PhDs in Kenya. In the face of this reality, Kenyans pursuing doctoral studies need to be quite circumspect as be able to spot when they are reclining to a bad PhD. It all starts with the learner and their choice. So, how is a learner to tell - in good time - that they are about to get a good or bad PhD? Before delving into the answers, it is important to lay down the ground rule. And this is that a PhD process is an intricate scientific investigation of phenomena that requires thorough preparation and adherence to established standards and measures of quality. It engenders rigour and vigour and students are expected to prepare thoroughly. The first thing a PhD student ought to do is find out if their university has what it takes to produce quality graduates at PhD or any other level. This points to the issue of quality of education on offer. With the world shrinking into a village with help of technology, the quality of education one obtains matters a lot in a highly competitive environment. To make a quality judgement about a degree, you have to scrutinise the entire quality assurance process in the value chain and how a given university enforces set standards in every important aspect. You must invest your time in this investigation. Your critical examination of the key issues must start with the accreditation of a university and its programmes. Has your degree programme been accredited by a credible body such as Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya or Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in the USA or other credible bodies? If your programme has not been accredited then you should be worried. Find out if your university is a member of such bodies as the Association of Africa Business Schools (AABS) and the Global Business School Network (GBSN) that help to advance the delivery of quality education in universities. The second issue entails supervision. If your supervisor has many PhD students you are most likely getting a raw deal. Supervising more than three PhD students in an academic year is a tall order. Does your supervisor encourage rigorous quantitative analysis? Exceptions relate to some social sciences that are best based on qualitative analysis. Also, find out if your supervisors encourage active students’ involvement in academic associations such as the Doctoral Association of East Africa (DEA) that is renowned for holding workshops for PhD students at all levels to encourage them to grow. Is your supervisor published in peer refereed journals or not? You must learn to manage your supervisor. Find out about his/her teaching and supervision philosophy and beliefs about the Doctoral process. Third, what is the quality of student leadership and how do they relate to quality assurance? The cumulative effect of the student body can be an important determinant of quality in regard to how they influence the delivery of teaching and quality. The student body must play a role in quality assurance and must always ask hard questions about quality and examinations integrity, especially of the Doctoral Comprehensive examinations. They must have the academic freedom to play an active role in their learning. Does your university encourage active students’ interaction and discussion with other doctoral students? Fourth, use of technology is a critical issue today. Do your classes have IT support and has your university encouraged the teachers to use IT in the delivery of their lectures? There must be evidence of the use of Power Point, videos and films, and simulations in the delivery of teaching. Lecturers who do not use modern IT support are most likely to give or are giving you a raw deal. Finally, we must recognise that there are many imponderables facing the education sector in the efforts to graduate as many Doctoral holders as possible. There are dwindling finances, the competition for students has increased and quality lecturers are rare commodities among other challenges. These are common challenges in the higher education sector in all countries in today’s globalised world. The challenges may sometimes lead to hurried and poor preparation of students because of the wish to graduate as many students as possible. The Doctoral students must be in the
forefront in demanding quality preparation. Students must demand active involvement. They must have a voice.?
Read more here

2. Morocco World News
Mohammed VI University Launches ‘Solar Decathlon Africa’ in Benguerir (Morocco)
Students from 20 countries gathered in Benguerir on August 21 to participate in the launch of Solar Decathlon Africa (SDA). SDA “challenges collegiate teams to design, build and operate grid-connected, attractive and net-zero-energy houses during an eighteen-month period,” says the competition’s website. At the end of the competition, taking place between August and September 2019, teams assemble their modular houses in a solar village open to the public from September 13 to 27 The competition includes 20 teams from different African countries such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Senegal, and Tanzania. North African countries include Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco. Turkey, Germany, France, and South Africa have also sent competing teams. This year, students have until September 13 to build and assemble solar-powered houses. The houses have taken over a year to be designed. Teams will be evaluated on the basis of ten events, scored out of 100 each. The team accumulating the maximum of points on one thousand will be named the winner. On November 15, 2016, the Moroccan Ministry of Energy, Mines and sustainable development; the Moroccan Research Institute in Solar Energy and New Energies (IRESEN); and the U.S. Department of Energy signed a memorandum of understanding. The memorandum’s signature came following the international conference on climate COP22 in Marrakesh discussing the importance of renewable energy. The memorandum aimed to build collaboration between all parties for the development of Solar Decathlon AFRICA. According to SDA’s website, the competition was designed to “integrate unique local and regional characteristics while following the philosophy, principles, and model of the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon.” On January 30, 2019, UM6P and IRESEN kicked off the 1st African version of the international student competition for green buildings “Solar Decathlon Africa.”
Read more here

3. Standard Digital
Inequalities in higher education funding as University of Nairobi gets more funding (Kenya)
A University of Nairobi (UoN) student receives three times more in Government subsidies as a student at the Machakos University College, according to a new World Bank report. The report released last week highlights funding disparities in Kenya’s institutions of higher learning, and faults the present funding system for not being based on an objective and transparent funding model. Titled Improving Higher Education Performance in Kenya, the report observes that resource allocation is negotiated directly between the universities and the Treasury, reflecting historical trends, the fiscal situation and the influence of each university’s leadership team. The World Bank report, based on per-student Government allocations in select public universities for the academic year 2017-18, found that the Government allocated Sh6.3 billion to UoN, which had a student population of 26,009. This means each student got an average of Sh242,000 in subsidies. But at the Machakos University College, which has a student population of 5,056, each student got Sh67,000 from the Sh340 million the institution got from the Exchequer. During the same period, Egerton University was given Sh2.8 billion. Each student out of the 15,223 is estimated to have got Sh184,000. And at the Technical University of Mombasa, each of the 4,520 students got an average of Sh170,000 from the Sh770 million allocated to the institution. At Kenyatta University, which received Sh3.1 billion during the period under review, each student got Sh144,000. It was closely followed by Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JCUAT), where each of the 21,462 students received
Sh141,000 from the Sh1.7 billion allocated. The Nairobi-based Technical University of Kenya, which has a population of 8,636, got Sh1.07 billion, meaning each student received an average of Sh124,000, while those at University of Eldoret got Sh77,000. The University of Eldoret had 14,275 students in 2017-18. The report says this system of resource allocation has several drawbacks. “From the Government’s viewpoint, the budget is not used as an instrument to ensure that the universities are aligned with the national development objectives of the country,” the report says.

Read more here

4. Taarifa

**Rwanda Wants 60% Of Students In TVET By 2024 (Rwanda)**

African states are currently choking on large numbers of educated youth that remain unemployed because they possess undesired skills for the markets. Rwanda is hosting an international conference bringing together members of the Commonwealth Association of Technical Universities and Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA). Prime Minister Edourd Ngirente is officiating at the conference sharing with participants the challenge of mismatch in labour market. The implementation of this strategy is ongoing in collaboration with the Private sector. According to Ngirente, Rwanda government seeks to increase the number of students attending TVET to 60% by 2024 from 31.1% in 2017. “We believe that TVET skills are one of the drivers that support the economic transformation we want in our country, and this is only possible if graduates from TVET schools are highly skilled and competitive on the labour market,” the Prime Minister told participants. He explains there are concerns that a considerable number of young Africans, often without needed skills, leave the school system every year in search for jobs. Participants at the conference followed a discussion involving Mulindwa Samuel, Permanent Secretary Rwanda Education Ministry, Dr. Kevit Desai, Kenya’s Principal Secretary in the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education (TVET) in the Ministry of Education. “Rwanda has done well in TVET because of the efficient utilisation of resources given towards their initiatives by Development Partners,” says Mulindwa. The government of Rwanda believes that having large numbers of its population skilled from TVETs will propel economic development and many Rwandans are very supportive in the development of TVET. The government of Rwanda believes that having large numbers of its population skilled from TVETs will propel economic development and many Rwandans are very supportive in the development of TVET.

Read more here

5. Independent

**Not enough Africa in African studies course, graduates claim (Africa)**

There was not enough Africa in a master’s course in African studies at a top university, graduates say. Former students of the University College London (UCL) have written an open letter to the leading institute to criticise the “Eurocentric” teaching and content of the programme. The letter, from the three female UCL graduates, concludes: “The irony is not lost on us that we are calling for a centring of Africa in an African studies programme, and yet, it needs to be done.” Their call is the latest example of growing pressure from students to “decolonise” the university curriculum. Speaking to The Independent, the president of the National Union of Students (NUS) has called on universities to take action to ensure the system is not biased towards white middle-class men. In one of her first interviews since taking up the role, Zamzam Ibrahim said she believes some institutions lack the motivation to make a significant change to diversify their campuses.
She said: “The university sector as a whole needs to understand there are structural biases. When universities were set up it was a space for predominately for white, middle-class men. An education system that was set up to advantage a particular group of people still exists to this day.” Jesutofunmi Odugbemi, Orapeleng Rammala and Wangui wa Kamonji, who are all of African descent, took the master’s course in 2017-18, where they say the majority of professors were white. The trio added that the course included a “disproportionately large number of cis-white male voices”. “The first class of our core African studies module began with how Europe has seen Africa historically, and only when we got to the final class of the module did students finally get a chance to consider how Africans have seen and see themselves,” the letter says. Speaking to Times Higher Education, Ms Kamonji said the main reason for the letter was to benefit “future students” who could “have a better picture of Africa through their studies”. She hopes the reading list will also be changed to include more diverse voices and African scholars. A UCL spokesperson said: “Students are at the heart of what we do and we value their opinions and feedback to improve the education we offer and their experience while studying at UCL. “Our work in Africa has always been in collaboration with and influenced by leading African scholars and the course has received consistently positive feedback from students during the four years it has run.”

Read more here

6. University World News

In major step, African universities body opens US office (Ghana)

The Association of African Universities (AAU), in partnership with the African Union (AU), is to open an office in Washington DC in the United States, which it hopes will help to promote relations and academic collaborations between universities in North America and their African counterparts. The North America Office of the Association of African Universities (AAU/NAMO) will be inaugurated at the African Union Permanent Mission to the United States in Washington on 1 October, in an event that will bring together diplomats, African diaspora scholars and higher education representatives from Africa, the US and Canada. It will also be attended by representatives of professional associations from both sides, in what is a major boost in the AAU’s bid to create linkages between African and American institutions. “The Association of African Universities (AAU) in collaboration with the African Union Permanent Mission to the United States of America, invites all stakeholders to the inauguration of the North America Office of the Association of African Universities,” said an invitation posted by the AAU on its website. “The event will witness a gathering of representatives from African diplomatic missions, academic and professional associations, ‘diasporans’ and key stakeholders of higher education in North America and from Africa,” it added. The event, it said, will also feature other day-long activities including speeches and discussions on a wide range of topics centred on the theme of strengthening North America-Africa academic relations. The list of guests and speakers has not yet been made public, but sub-themes of the day will include strengthening Africa-diaspora relations, strengthening US-Africa governments’ academic and research cooperation policies, and forging key strategic partnerships among key stakeholders in academia, professional associations, research institutions and ‘diasporan’ and African youth. While it has not been indicated what kind of partnership the AAU has forged with the AU in establishing the office, it seems like the AU will host the universities body, giving it the diplomatic impetus and force it would need to engage institutions in the affluent region. The new office comes seven months after the AAU opened a regional office for North Africa at Egypt’s Al-Azhar University in Cairo on 12 March. In March 2018, it opened an office for Eastern Africa in Sudan hosted by the University of Khartoum to cater for institutions in 15 countries in the wider Eastern African region, including Kenya, Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Somalia, Comoros and the Seychelles.

Read more here
7. Daily Monitor

**Ndejje University moves to start sports medicine course (Uganda)**

The sports fraternity have welcomed the proposed Sports Medicine course that Ndejje University is bidding to pioneer as a game-changer for Uganda’s sporting profession. Under the three-year Bachelor programme, students will receive in-depth training on injury diagnosis and management alongside field-related care for athletes during emergency, rehabilitation and return to sports. Officials of the university said they want to introduce the course to bridge the manpower gap for specialised care for sports personalities on and off the pitch. “Our job as stakeholders at this meeting where Ndejje University is presenting the proposed draft for the sports medicine curriculum is to give guidance, discuss the relevance of the programme in an era where we do not have such a program at any of the Ugandan universities,” Prof Eriabu Lugujjo, the vice chancellor of Ndejje University, said during a stakeholders’ meeting on Saturday. Present to preview and evaluate the course content were officials of the National Council of Sports and the National Council of Higher Education, university game tutors sports administrators and representatives from paramedical institutions. “We believe the net is wide open for the job market for professionals in Sports Medicine. In Uganda, we only have a handful of these professionals,” Prof Lugujjo told the meeting held at the Ndejje University Graduate School in Kampala. Such professionals, according to stakeholders, would be tapped to manage the health and fitness of footballers, athletes, golfers and other sportsmen and women locally and build a pool of talent even for exports. The curriculum drafted by a team led by Dr Haruna Muwonge, however, is pending approval.

Read more [here](#)

8. Daily Nation

**Fix the education system to earn respect of peers abroad (Kenya)**

I guess a visitor knows when he is no longer needed at the host’s house. Little hints start being dropped. An intelligent and honourable individual would pick up on the hints and make a quiet exit. Not the foolish one, who would keep hanging around despite all the humiliation thrown at him. In an African home, he becomes the single cause of drought in the house when taps run dry. He miraculously fills up the pit latrine from the reduced food now given. He gets blamed for depleting the eggs from infertile chicken and wearing out the television. One can move from being the most welcome guest to the most distasteful creature in a blink of an eye. The academics and invitees to conferences in the UK must now feel like unwanted guests following the sustained visa refusals for them to attend events in the UK. It is still unclear as to why the UK has allegedly been on a roll in declining record number of visas for African experts wishing to attend events in the UK. Top on the mind of most conspiracy theorists is that it is all a racist agenda. In that the old colonial master has turned his back on African experts in favour of the white ones. It is very easy to jump on a racist bandwagon when it comes to what Africans would consider unacceptable behaviour by their white counterparts or former colonies. For someone who has had a stint in Europe, I will tell you black people pull the racist card all the time. But are we always right even when it is entirely our fault sometimes? I remember the first time I drove on English roads. I just wheezed past traffic lights without a glance as long as the exits around me were clear. I sped along any avenues. When I got in trouble with the police, I cried racism till I turned hoarse. The bad habits I acquired in Nairobi where traffic lights never worked so our hapless police could get excuses for bribes, where driving drunk is the norm and an avenue being a wide open road I could speed liberally on, got me in trouble in a place that traffic rules are feared more than God. Our unsavoury behaviour that we have let to fester in Africa, mostly borne of corruption, is what seems to create tension wherever we travel abroad. During my driving lessons, I could distinguish the different traffic lights on the
Driving Theory booklet. But once I hit Nairobi roads, the reality was something completely alien to me. I was met by traffic lights that never lit, with the light bulbs gouged out and loose wires being the only evidence of lights having once lived inside the poles. I remember them being permanently locked on red, but cars still sped past them. To me red light always meant Go. At my first visit to England, I was under the impression jumping traffic lights is a global phenomenon and I easily did it. As old habits die hard, our bad behaviour on the roads is translocated elsewhere. Hence, why many Kenyans commit traffic offences abroad. Unfortunately, if it’s a place with strict traffic codes, then it becomes a bother to many who end up paying for their malfeasance with time in prison should injury or even death occur through negligence. Just as Kenya’s chaotic traffic lights analogy, we have rules in place in many of our organisations but do little to enforce them. The problems affecting African universities and research centres are analogous to our road traffic lights. They’re there to educate and produce exemplary citizens, but the opposite is happening. They’ve acquired notoriety like our chaotic roads for being lawless, corrupt and lazy. Our fraudulent behaviour now starts even earlier with principals in schools busy exchanging spaces for cash to the detriment of clever but poor pupils. Universities, especially in Kenya, have become factories for churning out fake degrees. Lying in exams and thesis is something that has now been exported abroad, especially to the UK and US, where at a fee a university student abroad can have his/her work done in Kenya.

Read more here

9. The Conversation
Scholarly success of African universities: common contributing factors (Africa)

As the start of the northern hemisphere academic year hundreds of thousands of students across Africa head to the airport. The reason for this “student exodus” is that those who can afford it head abroad for their tertiary education. Why do they go? A survey done last year found that 71% of African students studying outside Africa thought a degree earned abroad represented a higher-level qualification than a degree at home. The exodus can be attributed to numerous reasons. These include inadequate funding of tertiary education resulting in dilapidated campuses and obsolete study programmes that are not adapted to developments in science and technology. Other factors include an absence of research policy and insufficient resources. All these result in a perception of low quality African universities. That more than 70% of the students interviewed had a jaundiced view of an African degree seems a bit unjust. Nevertheless, the truth is that 17% of the world’s population lives on the African continent. Yet Africa has less than 1% of the world’s top 250 universities. But it’s not all doom and gloom. There are African universities, despite the financial constraints, that are getting it right. I did an analysis of universities on the continent to establish which were strongest in terms of research output. I used published research to identify the strongest and sourced scholarly outputs statistics from the academic database SciVal. I used a number of measures for the analysis. These included the number of scholarly outputs (academic publications), the growth of authors contributing to these outputs, the number of international co-authors and the proportion of scholarly outputs in the top 10% of academic journals. I looked at the period between 2014 to 2019. The number of outputs represents the research productivity of academics within an institution. For their part, articles published in the top 10% of academic journals serve to quantify the quality and impact of the scholarly outputs. The level of international co-authors indicates the level of international research collaboration and global prestige of each institution. What emerged from the analysis is the similarity in the strategic approaches the best and aspiring African universities employ to achieve an increase in both scholarly output and quality. All universities covered in the article deemed international partnerships as essential to research productivity.

Two of the top universities in Africa for published research – also known as scholarly output – are the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand. Both are in South Africa. They are ranked
in the top 250 globally. Both universities have between 30%-35% of all their scholarly output published in the top 10% of global academic journals. This is important for universities’ prestige as well as their finances. Also notable was the high number of international co-authors in their outputs. At the University of Cape Town it was 60%. At the University of the Witwatersrand it was 54%. An institution with a rapid increase in scholarly outputs is Egypt’s Zewail City of Science and Technology. Established in 2012, just over 43% of its scholarly outputs were published in the top 10% of global academic journals. In addition, 51% of all its outputs were co-authored with international institutions. There are positive signs in Nigeria too. The University of Ibadan was the top West African university for scholarly outputs. The university has 15% of all its outputs published in the top 10% of academic journals. And 38% of its publications were co-authored with institutions in other countries. Another institution with an increasing scholarly output rate is Covenant University, Nigeria. It’s also a relatively young institution – it was opened in 2002. Just over 8% of all its outputs were published in the top 10% of academic journals. The fact that 31% of its publications were co-authored with institutions in other countries demonstrated a collaborative approach to research.

So how have these African universities bucked the trend, and made their voices heard outside Africa? Read more [here](#)

### 10. University World News

**The power of international student networking** (Uganda)

Like most of her female classmates growing up in Uganda, Ritah Arishaba’s family couldn’t afford to buy feminine hygiene pads month after month. But unlike many of them, her mother taught her to make reusable pads from old clothes. Arishaba never missed a day of school because of her periods, and she thinks it made a difference. By the time she graduated high school and landed a scholarship for college, other classmates had dropped out. Some of them “ended up getting pregnant, as young as 12 years old”, she says. So when she came to Arizona State University as a freshman in 2015, Arishaba knew she wanted to use her education to help keep girls in school when they’re menstruating. Now, four years later, what was once “just an idea” has become “a real thing”, she says. Arishaba is co-founder of Strong Women Strong Love, an initiative that delivers feminine hygiene products and reproductive health education to women and girls in both Phoenix, Arizona in the United States and Kakiika Village in Mbarara, Uganda, where Arishaba grew up. Women and girls around the world can recall those anxious and awkward moments when they were caught without tampons or sanitary pads. But the broader implications for gender inequity and poverty around menstruation have gained traction in recent decades through global initiatives that aim to take the shame out of a natural biological function. In 2013, activists launched Menstrual Hygiene Day (28 May) as part of a campaign to develop public policy around menstrual hygiene management. The World Bank has linked menstrual hygiene to UNESCO’s sustainable development agenda, which calls on governments to ensure that all students have access to quality education by 2030. UNESCO estimates that one in 10 girls worldwide misses school when her period comes around. Arishaba credits the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program with providing her the opportunity and resources to carry out a dream goal. The programme partners with 22 universities, primarily in North America and Africa, to provide support for more than 9,000 economically disadvantaged youth who want to use their college education as a springboard for positive change in their communities. Most of them are from Africa. The idea for Strong Women Strong Love began to take shape in Arishaba’s first year at Arizona State University (ASU), when she volunteered at a local homeless shelter. The women she met there reminded her of the girls who lived in safe houses in Uganda. In both cases, girls and women did the best they could each month despite lacking basic needs such as sanitary products, clean water and privacy. She decided she had to do something. Her first step was to assemble a team, starting with other ASU Mastercard Scholars. Alpha Ngwenya, an economics major from Zimbabwe, agreed to coordinate the financial ins and outs of the Phoenix operation,
while Tresor Cyubahiro, a software engineering major from Rwanda, spread the word by designing and maintaining the initiative’s online presence. Also contributing expertise were US advisers and mentors who knew how to tap into resources in the local community. Today, about 25 volunteers continue to collect donations from local churches and community organisations to distribute hundreds of pads to Phoenix-area shelters each month.

Read more here

Note to Editors/PROs:

To share news/events about your Universities, contact:

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