

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

1. Times Higher Education

Falling African share of tertiary education aid 'a great concern' (Africa)

A fall in the share of higher education aid directed to Africa over the past 20 years is a “great concern” that urgently needs addressing in the light of the continent’s exploding youth population, it has been warned. The comments follow a report from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation that revealed the proportion of Official Development Assistance for tertiary education (TE ODA) going to Africa was lower than a fifth (18 per cent) in 2019, down from 31 per cent in 2002. At the same time, the report suggests that middle-income countries received about 70 per cent of such aid in 2019, far higher than the share going to the lowest-income nations (12 per cent). China on its own received 8 per cent of tertiary aid even though it is also becoming a substantial donor itself. The analysis used data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and other sources to estimate the amount and types of aid flowing between donor and recipient countries. It suggests that tertiary overseas aid almost doubled between 2002 and 2019 to about \$5.3 billion (£4.3 billion) in 2019, with more than 70 per cent represented by scholarships for students to study in donor country institutions or the support costs associated with this. Germany (\$1.7 billion), which has spent tens of millions supporting Syrian refugees at its institutions, and France (\$900 million), with its links to francophone Africa, together accounted for almost half the 2019 total. The report raises questions about the “substantial” share taken up by student support, given it is money “reinvested in the donor country” and may not always directly benefit recipient nations. It also says the share of tertiary aid received by upper-middle countries, such as China, “is highly controversial”, while the low share for the poorest nations displayed “a disconnect with the equity principle and the narrative of ODA as a policy to close inequalities”. Read more [here](#)

2. University World News

African Centres of Excellence want to secure their longevity (East Africa-South Africa)

The World Bank-funded Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACE II) have raised millions of dollars to guarantee their sustainability. The 24 centres have so far raised a total of US\$21 million to fund various initiatives to ensure they continue running beyond December 2023 when the World Bank funding officially winds up. But the funds that have been sourced so far are mainly from external funders, despite African governments’ commitments to spend at least 1% of their GDP on research and innovation. The East and Southern Africa hubs based at universities in eight host countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia – since commencement of the project in 2016, have been undertaking different activities to fundraise and survive beyond the bank’s disengagement. “ACEII matches US\$1 for every US\$1 raised from national sources, and US\$2 for every US\$1 raised from regional and international sources. Through this, the ACEs are developing the skills to compete for research and other external funding opportunities to finance their development needs after the project closes,” said Roberta Malee Bassett, a senior education specialist at the World Bank. ACEII, the official said, is both the “result of and the conduit” for an extensive commitment to research and capacity-building across Sub-Saharan Africa, thus the need to ensure its continuity. Read more [here](#)

3. UFS

Fresh from the farm – UFS Experimental Farm delivers research with social impact (South Africa)

Adding to the value chain, extending the teaching and learning process, and supporting the development of the surrounding communities – this is the result of seven years of hard work for the Paradys Experimental Farm of the University of the Free State (UFS). Whether it is yoghurt and cheese from the dairy factory, wool products from the wool production and wool processing hub, or an ice-cold beer from the fermentation institute, the farm will soon share the fruits of its labour with the Bloemfontein community. Situated outside Bloemfontein on the road to Reddersburg, the farm is an agricultural training centre in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences for UFS students who, among others, take modules in agriculture, working with cattle, sheep, crop cultivation, and milk production. Moreover, the farm also offers training opportunities to members of the community, ranging from short courses in animal health and animal breeding to workshops in wool classing, sheep handling, and sheep management. “We want to take students through the entire production chain. It is a valuable part of our teaching and can make our work on the farm more profitable. The aim is to extend the use of a specific product. Instead of only selling milk, we add value to the product and sell it, for instance, as cheese or yoghurt. Or in the case of grain, rather than only selling it to wholesalers to make bread, it can be fermented into beer and waste can be used as animal feed,” says Prof Frikkie Nesor, Head of the Department of Animal Sciences. He is the convenor of this initiative, along with the Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Prof Danie Vermeulen. Currently, eight departments in four of the faculties at the UFS are involved in the work on the experimental farm. Read more [here](#)

4. PML Daily

FAO, Makerere University embark on training scientists on digital soil-mapping (Uganda)

KAMPALA – Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations – FAO in partnership with Makerere University have on Monday began a five-day digital soil-mapping training course to selected scientists to enhance the use of fertilizers to scale up the sustainable management of soils in Uganda. Titled: “Capacity Development on Sustainable Soil Management for Uganda”, the workshop is aimed at contributing to building capacity for national soil database and soil monitoring for the key stakeholders in Uganda. The training is part of FAO’s ongoing intervention to strengthen capacity of public and private institutions and communities to sustainably manage natural resources, restore degraded lands and protect vital ecosystems. Organized through FAO’s project on “Capacity development on sustainable soil management – Africa”, the soil-mapping course is financed by the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchange and the Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China. Opening the training at the College of Computing and Information Sciences, Makerere University on Monday afternoon, Mr Anping Ye, Director, Office of South-South and Triangular Cooperation Division, FAO said that the activity is within the context of the South-South cooperation arrangements. “Under the South to South Cooperation, FAO plays an active role in facilitating cooperation between countries to exchange information, knowledge and technologies to promote agriculture, reduce food insecurity and malnutrition.” “In the context of Uganda, in Agriculture sector, FAO has facilitated cooperation arrangements between Uganda and Peoples Republic of China. One of the ongoing cooperation arrangements with Uganda, in particular through Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, is sharing of knowledge and experiences on sustainable soil management,” he added. Read more [here](#)

5. University World News

ARUA sets target for increased research outputs, more PhDs (Africa)

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) has launched a strategic plan covering the period 2022-27 as a framework towards increasing the African continent's contribution to global cutting-edge research output to 5% over a period of 10 years. ARUA is a network of 16 selected flagship research universities in Africa with a common vision to expand and significantly enhance the quality of research carried out by African researchers. The network has been operational since March 2015, when it was inaugurated in Dakar, Senegal. The alliance has been active in positioning research universities on the continent and sees the higher education sector as key role players in informing and executing the education and development targets of the African Union's Agenda 2063. The strategy underscores the role of ARUA as a network of public universities that supports the transformation of Africa by means of research and innovation. The plan will align ARUA's current initiatives with its core vision of significantly expanding and enhancing the quality of research done in Africa by African researchers to consolidate the gains made since its inception. The strategy has four pillars: enhanced research (see table), expanded and improved graduate training and support, strengthening institutional capability for research management and research advocacy. Under the broad aim of improving graduate training, ARUA wants universities to have a minimum of 75% instead of 45% PhD holders as academic staff over a 10-year period to help in the development of good quality PhD graduates for other African universities. Read more [here](#)

6. Higher Ed Drive

How are academic libraries evaluating streaming media for their collections? (Global)

Academic librarians are far more interested in streaming media's effect on instruction than they are in relationships with companies providing the content, according to new survey data that gauges how libraries are approaching resources like documentaries, films, music and podcasts — and how they anticipate spending on streaming materials in the future. Almost all respondents, 96%, said the impact on instruction was important when purchasing or renewing streaming licenses, found a survey released Thursday by educational research nonprofit Ithaka S+R. That was slightly more than the portion who labeled as important annual cost, 94%, and content quality, 90%. At the other end of the spectrum, just 27% said long-term relationships with a content provider were important, and only 26% said flexible payment models were important. College libraries say streaming media has grown more critical for meeting student needs since the pandemic first prompted college campuses to send students home. Two-thirds of polled librarians said streaming media has become more important in meeting student needs since March of 2020, and 42% said demand for streaming media has increased since then. The survey comes at a time when the proliferation of streaming media is opening up educational and research possibilities but also stressing budgets, said Makala Skinner, senior surveys analyst at Ithaka S+R and co-author of a report the nonprofit published on the survey results. Read more [here](#)

7. University World news

MPs reject bill aimed at curtailing university autonomy (Kenya)

Kenya's parliament has rejected a legal framework that would have given the cabinet secretary for education sweeping powers in the appointment of vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, principals of university constituent colleges and members of university councils in public universities. If the members of parliament, or MPs, had assented to the Universities Amendment Bill 2021, the cabinet secretary would

have acquired the authority to revoke appointments, transfer or sack such office bearers and even set aside decisions of senates and university councils. In order to achieve that objective, the cabinet secretary would have acquired powers to appoint and control selection panels for the appointment of the top university officials. In total, the bill had 20 amendments which, according to MP Amos Kimunya, the leader of the majority Jubilee Party in parliament, were meant to improve governance in higher education. But MPs who were debating the bill on its third reading on 7 June argued that the amendments were unconstitutional as there had been no public participation on those issues. “We are aware that other stakeholders in higher education were not consulted,” said Kimani Ichung’wah, another MP. Many MPs were opposed to suggestions to restructure the Universities Fund, a facility that was established to raise funds for public universities and to start providing resources to private universities that admitted government-sponsored students. Read more [here](#)

8. AAU

Centres of Excellence Explore More Effective Ways to Accelerate Development Impact in the Region (Africa)

To propel the overarching goal of the Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact), and to ensure that the research outputs of higher education institutions address national and regional challenges, the Disbursement Linked Indicator (DLI 2) was instituted. The DLI2 indicator measures the development impact that Centres are having, both nationally and regionally in terms of the extent of their contribution to their respective sectors/industries. It supports the advancement of applied research, training of quality post graduates, industry linkages and innovativeness aimed at tackling societal challenges. Its evaluation criteria include the number of student internships recorded by a centre, number of graduates hired in the sector, number of short courses delivered in response to sectoral stakeholder requests and an evaluation of Sectoral Advisory Board annual reports, as well as feedback obtained from interviews with sectoral stakeholders. The DLI 2, is coordinated by Technopolis in close collaboration with the Regional Facilitation Unit -the Association of African Universities and the World Bank. At the ongoing 7th ACE Impact Regional Workshop, a session on Development Impact was held to provide the opportunity for an interactive discussion on how the centres are progressing towards achieving development impact in line with the project objectives. Chaired by Dr. Joshua Atah, the Focal Member for Nigeria, the session benefited from panel discussions involving Prof. Gordon Awandare from the West Africa Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogen (WACCBIP), Prof. Emenike Ejiogu, Center leader for Africa Center of Excellence for Sustainable Power and Energy Development (ACE_SPED) and Prof. Daouda Mama, Center leader for the Africa Center of Excellence for Water and Sanitation (C2EA). Read more [here](#)

9. Los Angeles Times

How the pandemic is changing higher education for the better (Global)

During college graduation season, it’s easy to get swept up by the notion of the great promise of higher education, even if recent statistics tell a different, more sobering story. The public’s view of the value of a college degree has continued to decline, shockingly so. Only about half of 1,060 high school students surveyed in January say they want to earn a four-year degree. And enrollment — already predicted to sag throughout this decade — has fallen scarily in the last two years in almost every postsecondary sector.

Since the pandemic hit more than two years ago, 1.4 million students who were registered for college have dropped out, according to the National Student Clearinghouse. Perhaps even more disturbing is the rapidly rising number of Americans who have earned some college credits but no degree. In 2020, that applied to 36 million of us; in two short years that figure has climbed to 39 million. The largest percentage, more than 16%, live in California. This is not surprising since the state has the largest population of college students in the U.S. — more than 2.6 million potential graduates are enrolled. The pandemic is commonly blamed for higher education’s poor showing, a statement that’s more convenient than fair. Before COVID showed up, we and others had already identified key issues that would alter the higher-education landscape. Students from underserved groups were being affected by food and housing insecurity, the digital divide, the high cost of textbooks, and the expense and inaccessibility of childcare. COVID’s contribution — brutal and catastrophic — has accelerated the challenges students face while trying to earn postsecondary degrees or credentials. Read more [here](#)

10. Times Higher Education

Have competitive research grants had their day? (Global)

Australia’s government should wind back the competitive research funding system to avoid the massive opportunity cost of unsuccessful grant applications, a policy expert says. Andrew Norton, professor in the practice of higher education policy at the Australian National University, said the competitive funding system had fulfilled its purpose and no longer warranted the “huge amount of wasted time” it entailed. “It’s not like it was in the 1980s, when governments suspected that academics were slack on the research side and wanted a process to improve its quality,” he said. “The culture has changed totally since then. Universities have strong incentives, via the rankings and other things, to maximise their performance. Is the ARC [Australian Research Council] constructively contributing to research in Australia? That’s the question we really need to ask.” Academics say they typically spend a month each year submitting funding applications to the ARC, which rejects about 80 per cent of them. “That’s not counting the time of all the assessors who look at these grant proposals,” Professor Norton said. “To me, the big benefit in getting an ARC grant is high status. That’s not necessarily an economically efficient way of funding the research system.” An alternative approach would see funding for research projects distributed to universities through a mechanism like the research block grant (RBG) framework, which helps to pay for PhD stipends and overheads such as laboratories, assistants and consumables. Professor Norton said this would overcome a structural weakness of Australia’s competitive grants, which do not cover the full costs of research – forcing universities to supplement every research grant through unreliable funding sources such as international students’ tuition fees. Under a block grant approach, universities would have discretion over how research money was spent. Read more [here](#)

11. All Africa

When Education and Recycling Meet With an Innovator's Dream (Nigeria)

A school in Lagos, Nigeria, is accepting empty plastic bottles from parents in exchange for their children's school fees, thanks to a recycling project. Through the Recycle Pay Project Initiative, Grace and her sister and co-founder Rose Amuzie, are offering low-cost educational services to low-income families. The initiative which was introduced in 2019, was launched in partnership with the African Clean-up Initiative. Grace Amuzie recently won the first place at the Savvy Prize for Impact Driven Entrepreneurs. How do you get children to school and clean up plastic waste at the same time? Well, you could start a school that

accepts recyclables as payment. And that is precisely what innovator Grace Amuzie did with her sister Rose Amuzie, and a partnership with the Africa Cleanup Initiative. Education is key in dealing with the challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. But this human right is still out of the reach of many Nigerian children. According to the World Bank, almost 70 million Nigerians live below the poverty line. And the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says that Nigeria has very high levels of out-of-school children, which is being worsened by the ongoing violence and instability in the northeast of the country, coupled with the novel coronavirus pandemic that plunged the economy into a recession. It also says at least one million children will likely stay away from school because of the threat of violence, following a series of mass kidnappings and attacks targeting learners in 2021 alone. Read more [here](#)

12. Inside Higher Eds

What's Wrong With Students? No—What's Wrong With Us? (Global)

he past few years have seen a well-documented rise in reported adolescent and college student distress, and college counseling centers are overwhelmed with the task of providing services. The \$64 million question often asked is “What is wrong with these students?” This question is an unfortunate invitation to blame and scapegoat our students. This simplistic thinking falls short of considering the contextual and systematic factors contributing to students’ distress. We look toward them as the problem rather than thinking about how our communities are working together (or not) to create the current challenges. In what follows, we offer some thoughts about what institutional factors are contributing to students’ suffering. Our perspective is grounded in our experiences as directors of a college counseling center on the front lines of college student mental health and in the developmental model we use in our clinical work with students. The ongoing interaction between clinical work and theory has led us to elaborate a model of college student development that focuses on the importance of being able to be curious about differences, set limits and tolerate disappointments. While others have noted that the transition to college offers a repetition of our earliest developmental tasks around separating and individuating, our developmental model argues that this time is more than just a replaying of earlier years but rather a chance to focus on the existential aspects of the processes of becoming. For example, college-age students, working to establish a vibrant identity, must contend with the idea that they cannot be everything or all the things that they or loved ones imagined. Like small children who must face the realization they will not have all their needs met all the time, how students come to mourn and accept this has important ramifications for their sense of beingness and the way they occupy space in the world in relationships to others. Read more [here](#)

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