

ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES – Challenges and Prospects

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Dec 01, 2010

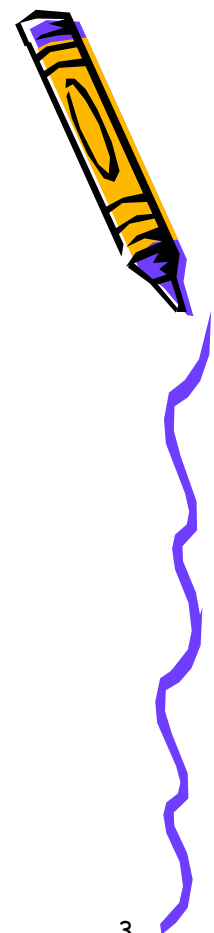
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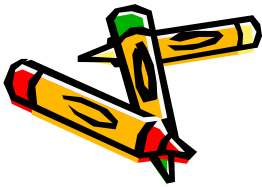
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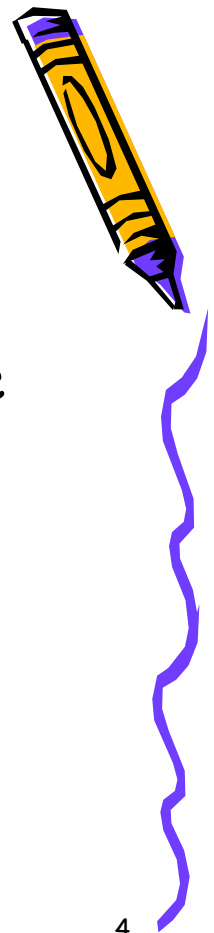
Preamble

- Congratulations to the PASCAL International Observatory for the research project in 19 regions on PASCAL Universities Regional Engagement (PURE)



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What I Intend to Do

1. Brief on roles of Universities in Knowledge Economy
2. The African Situation
3. University Engagement
4. Strategies of Engagement
5. Challenges and prospects of Engagement in African Universities

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Importance of Knowledge



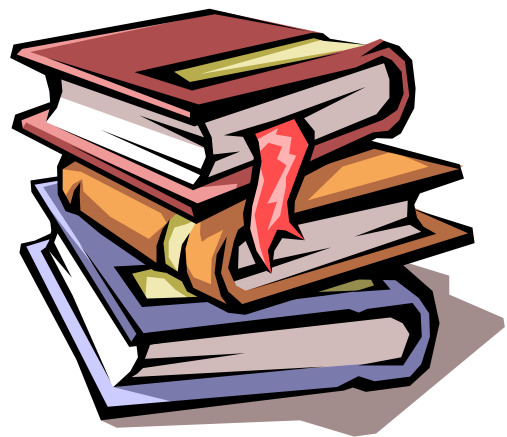
Knowledge has become an important determinant of the wealth of nations

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Education in the Society

Education is now seen as a service company with the society as the market-place



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Responsibilities of Universities

Universities should be more Innovative and responsive to the needs of a globally competitive Knowledge economy and to the changing labour requirements for advanced human Capital

– (World Bank, 2002)

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Higher Education Institutions' Responsibilities

- Knowledge Creation
- Knowledge dissemination and application
- Engagement



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The Concept - **ENGAGEMENT**

Connected with the ability of the university to bridge the gap between the institution and the community , including all the stakeholders (Society).



The Concept - Engagement

Engagement is the process of

(i) **Connecting people and communities to supplies of knowledge and research residing in the university**

and

(ii) **Connecting the University with real community problems.**

Engagement :

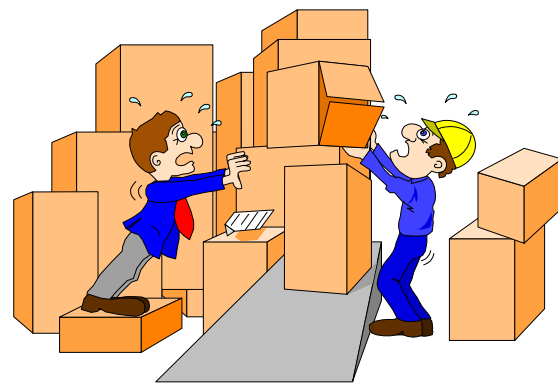
- Is the partnering of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors
- Activities of Universities in contributing to the development (economic, social, cultural and environmental) of the cities and regions in which they are located .

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The Engaged University

- Is one that is fully connected with its students, other constituents and the communities it serves.





Characteristic of the Engaged University

1. Stimulates and organizes an exchange of knowledge and provides education having economic, social and cultural value.
2. Has both an expansive knowledge base at its disposal and faculty with the ability to create new ideas for the common good.



Characteristic of the Engaged University

3. Rewards and encourages relevance and quality,
4. Promotes student involvement, and fosters governmental cooperation at all levels,
5. Rewards innovation in instruction, research and outreach.

Scope of Engagement

- Mutually beneficial activities and not philanthropy (Relevant research, Productive teaching, Distance -learning, Life-long learning, Creative enterprises, etc
- Focussed and organized partnership.
- Extends to all University Constituency (Staff, Students, Unions, Convocation, etc)



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Areas of Engagement

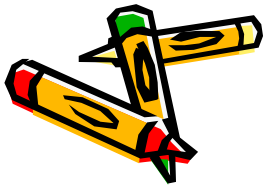
(1) Research

(2) Teaching , Learning and Students' experience

(3) Social responsiveness.

(prepare citizen scholars, endorse democratic values and civic responsibility, address critical societal issues (e g. Economic development) and in general contribute to the public good.

Focus on Africa



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Background Information on Engagement of African HEIs

- Higher Education has long history in Africa.
- Al Ahzar in Cairo and Karawyyin in Fez in the 1st Century, Timbuku in the 13th century
- Affected by Slavery and recent colonial history
- Modern HE is a post-colonial phenomenon...

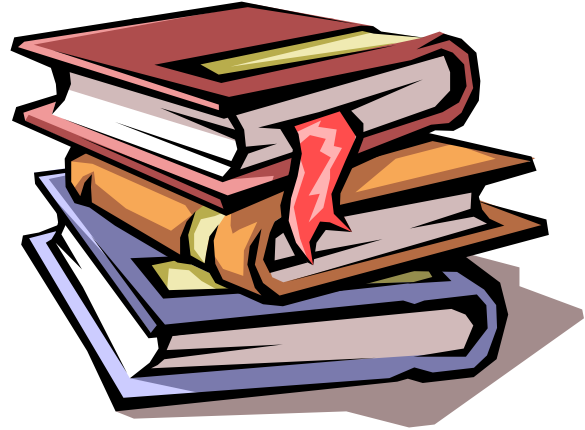


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Modern Higher Education in Africa

- Over 2300 HEIs
- About 6.2 million students
- Public and Private participation
- Gross Enrolment is 5%



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Africa Today

Facing many challenges which higher education institutions can meet through active ENGAGEMENTS

- 46 – 50 years life expectancy;
- Income range : 100 – 2800 USD
- Primary School : 76%
- Secondary School: 26%



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Africa Today (II)

- 166 million Africans live in slums;
- 73% of Africans have no access to electricity



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Africa Today (III)

- 1000 women die for every 10,000 children that are born.
- Out of 1000 children that are born, over 250 die out of hunger.



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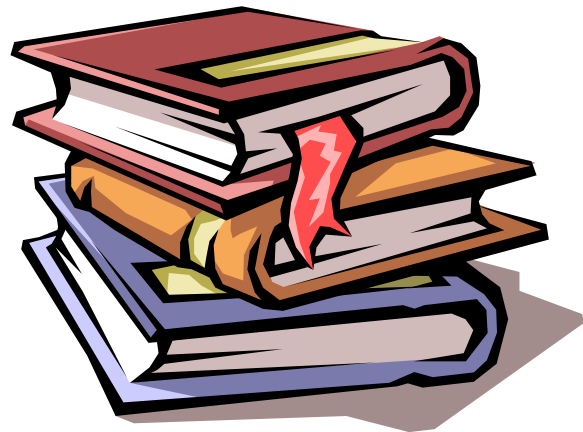
Africa Today (IV)

- **Malaria kills 900,000 Africans each year;**
- **HIV-AIDS;**
- **Polio etc**



Fundamental Challenges to University Engagements In Africa:

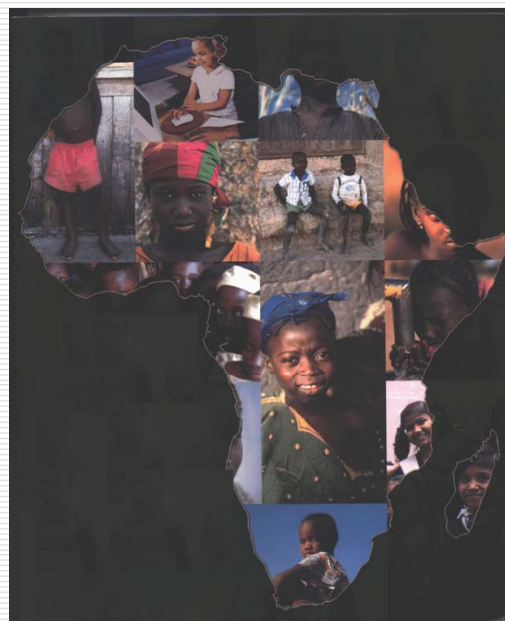
- **SSA spends less than 0.3% of GDP on research**
- **Global scientific output is 0.3 - 0.5% of world outputs;**
- **Accounts for lowest ratio of researchers per million inhabitants.**
- **Less than 15% of annual world research publications**



University Engagement in the African Context

Despite the challenges, Africa has Long history of University-Community Engagement.

However, dimension of engagement varies from region to region and from one university to another.



Strategies of Engagement

- i. **Outreach Programs.**
- ii. **Speciality Extension Program**
- iii. **University Engagement of Community Expertise in the University Programmes**
- iv. **University-Students Work Experience Scheme.**
- v. **University-Community Business / research Engagements.**
- vi. **Technological Consultancies**
- vii. **Specialized University-Government Engagements**
- viii. **Community-based learning / Service Learning.**
- ix. **Cross-Cultural Volunteering**



1. Outreach Programs

Direct community service, whereby the university organizes programmes which address the most Urgent needs of some of their respective Countries communities



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Some Outreach Programmes

University	Outreach
Makerere University in Uganda, Institute of Public health	Runs a model health centre at Kasangaki,
a) University of Zambia. (b) University of Nairobi (c) University of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	Free travelling Theatres using local languages addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤Corruption; ➤HIV-AIDS; ➤Family-Planning ➤Democracy and Good governance,

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2. Speciality Extension Program

Specialized extension Departments , who do not just train personnel on extension issues but mount up local extension programs for their communities.



3. Engagement of Community Expertise in the University Programmes

System of tapping from the skills and expertise of the local communities, even when they do not have the usual teaching and Research qualifications



4. University-Students Work Experience Scheme

Universities have
Been able to
incorporate a
Student Work
Experience Scheme
Internship their
programmes



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5. University-Community Business / Engagements

- 'Technology parks and incubators'
- the universities and business sector are involved in some staff-student research projects relationships.

Example: South African Diamond Firm (DeBeers) funding of the setting up and maintenance of a nuclear research station at the University of Witwatersrand

6. Technological Consultancies

- **Technology Consultancy Centres, which offers technical services and advice to the industry and especially to the Small Medium Enterprises.**

7. Specialized University-Government Engagements

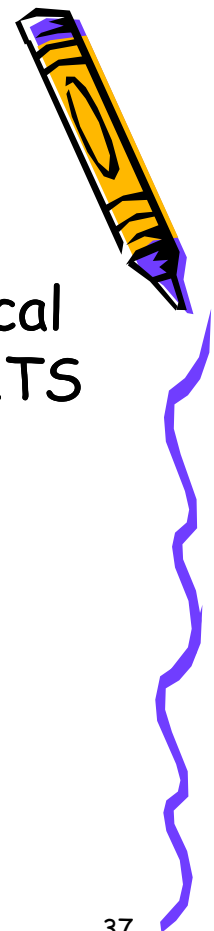
- Specialized Man-power training: Universities help in training the required manpower needed for the government machineries.
- Some special studies on behalf of the government.
- Special training of countries legislators.
- Evening Adult Education for government workers – E.g. Postgraduate studies

8. Community-based learning / Service Learning

- Engages students in activities where both the community and students are primary beneficiaries and
- where the goals are to provide a service to the community and, equally, to enhance student learning through provision of this service.

9. Cross-Cultural Volunteering

- Bournemouth University Global Local Education program's KENYA SPORTS EXPENDITION.





Benefits of Engagements

- The Community (Local and Global)
- The University

Benefits to the Community

1. Enhanced human and social capital development,
2. Accelerated economic growth in the community,
3. Improved professional and intellectual infrastructure in communities,



Benefits to the Community

4. The development of a knowing and active citizenry that can deliver greater corporate and community responsibility.
5. Spin-off companies set up through such partnerships.
6. Regional economic growth or improved economic returns from tourism.

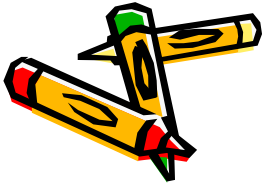


Benefits to the Community

7. Indirect economic outcomes - improved societal health, less dependency on remedial education and welfare and increased rates of volunteerism.
8. Access of communities to universities' physical resources and their specialist intellectual capacities.

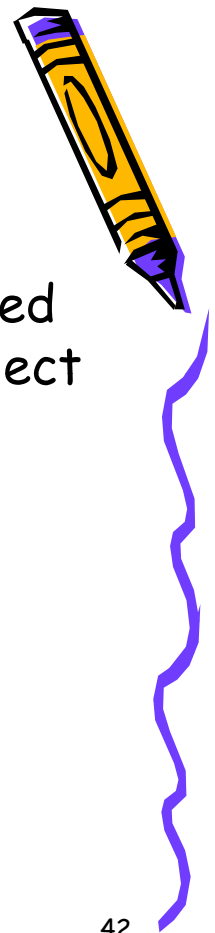
Benefits to the University - A

1. Students involved in this type of engaged learning develop important skills in project management, team work and communication.
2. Students' learning outcomes will be enhanced through curricula that are relevant to community issues and priorities.



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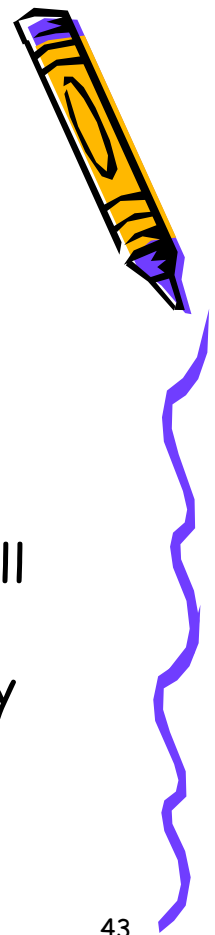
Benefits to the University - B

3. Promotes and develops social responsibility and awareness among students.
4. Increased opportunities for student experiential learning and internships will benefit students and universities by ensuring both are alive to contemporary issues and needs.



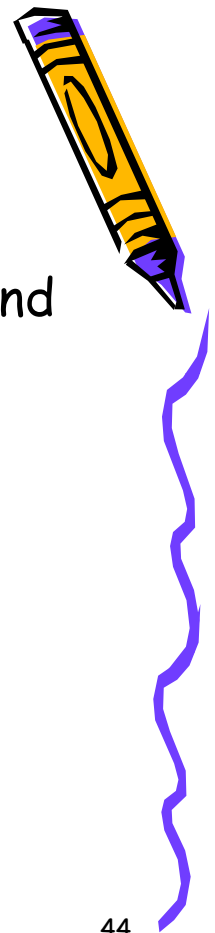
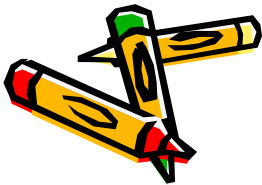
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Benefits to the University - C

5. Opens up new research opportunities and new funding sources, permitting the appointment of new staff or the acquisition of infrastructure.
6. It provide the basis for improved research productivity as partnerships
7. Enhanced university's reputation as a result of the engagement.



Benefits to the University - D

8. Makes the academic missions of these institutions more responsive and relevant to the pressing contemporary problems of society.
9. University visibility is enhanced and makes it easy for universities and their staff to contribute to national debates and also makes government to consult with universities on developmental issues.
10. It makes it possible for universities to influence national and communities policies through their research.





Challenges - A

1. **Structural** - Lack of Internal Institutional Support and or Coherent Government Policy Framework:
2. **Financial** - Funding
3. **Planning**: Sustainability Constraints. Not many Universities have developed Policies on Engagement in their strategic plans



Challenges – B (Internal Mgt)

4. **Politicization of engagements and lack of supporting conducive environments.**
5. **Corruption and Lack of Transparencies.**
6. **Massification in the Universities – where academics have little or no time beyond teaching.**

Challenges –C (Capacity)

7. Conflicts and Political instability - Unstable University calendars
8. **Absence or Lack of Capacity For Engagement**
9. Brain Drain
10. **Lack of Faculty Reward and Recognition over Engagement Activities**

Conclusion - Urgent needs

- Political education of leaders - Need to understand how they can partner with HEIs in their regions for their common good.
- Strategic out-reach of universities to the cities (City Need Assessment Studies)**
- Internal re-orientation of academics towards development -oriented and relevant research
- University recognition of community engagement in assessing service of academics.**



● Thank you

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