

## RUFORUM 19<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM)

### TRANSFORMING UNIVERSITY PROCESSES, SYSTEMS AND LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Ideas note for Webinar Two Scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023 at 15:00-17:00 (EAT)

Webinar Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/3HANGSC>

#### Introduction

Social, economic and political processes on national to global scale are piling pressure on higher education systems and institutions. These diverse pressures require universities and higher education institutions to implement innovative solutions and cope with the rapidly change environment whilst staying steady to their missions<sup>1</sup>. As countries transition their focus to a global competitive knowledge based economies, higher education is experiencing greater pressure for an active and focused role in the process. Accordingly, the has created a complex atmosphere within which higher education institutions function under with institutions striving to balance a cocktail of interests from their governments, private sector, society, political circles as well as within the internal dynamics involving; students, academics and non-academics<sup>2</sup>. High education institutions are required to cope with these complexities through quality management, innovation, reconfiguring relationships between teaching, and learning as well as internal controls of quality assurance.

Africa's higher education has grown rapidly over the last two decades with more than double the number of students in the system. Most of this growth is driven by the completion of the full cycles of universal primary and secondary education. While entry into higher education ramped-up leading to massification questions of the low quality of education, low levels of integration of the education with the economic and social sectors leading to persistently high unemployment among graduates as well as rising inequalities and exclusion at entry at various levels<sup>3</sup>. It would appear that the overall enrollment in higher education (8.9%) is high but compared to the global levels, yet it remains far below those of other regions 37% for Asia, 21.9% for Europe, 20.4% for North America and 12% for Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>4</sup>. The underlying constraint in most Africa's higher education institutions is that student numbers have not matched pace with teaching, infrastructure, personnel and financing resources. These limitations are keeping higher education institutions in the continent to perform dimly in global comparisons with strong intra-continent disparities<sup>5</sup>.

Conversations of how universities and their graduates can become more relevant can become more relevant have intensified. However, for the universities and their graduates to become more relevant and alive to local and global concerns and how they function as well as the associated processes including how teaching and learning happens. One of the issues of concern for African universities to address has been inequality<sup>6</sup> in access that is rising as the cost of education rises amidst already disproportionate access at lower levels between urban and rural, females and males as well as across the economic clusters in society. Contemporary universities have educated young people to fit in the stable professional labour market. There is edginess rising in the labour market with calls for greater focus on skills. When Ernst & Young in 2015 announced that

<sup>1</sup> Hamdani, K., & Koubaa, S. (2021). The strategic planning of university transformation: the case of Moroccan public universities. *Projectics/Proy ctica/Projectique*, 28(1), 51-68.

<sup>2</sup> Teixeira, P. N., Veiga, A., da Rosa, M. J. M. P., & Magalh es, A. (Eds.). (2019). *Under Pressure: Higher Education Institutions Coping with Multiple Challenges*. Brill.

<sup>3</sup> MacGregor, K. (2016). Key role for universities in African education strategy. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20160205113242926>

<sup>4</sup> Zeleza, P. (2021). Quality higher education 'indispensable' for Africa's future. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=202107051145016>

<sup>5</sup> Hallberg Adu, K. (2020). Resources, relevance and impact—key challenges for African universities: how to strengthen research and higher education in Africa. *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet*.

<sup>6</sup> Hallberg Adu, K. (2020). Resources, relevance and impact—key challenges for African universities: how to strengthen research and higher education in Africa. *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet*.

it was no longer taking a focus on university qualifications in its global talent sourcing because there was no correlation between success at university and achievement in later life, it sent shivers to the universities<sup>7</sup>. However, it had ultimately sent a strong signal to learning institutions; time was up for business as usual for the teaching and learning ecosystem. These agitations and events call for changes at various levels, processes and systems of universities.

This Webinar on “Transforming university processes, systems and learning experience” is about exploring the unfolding patterns within higher education in Africa with a focus to often under-attended to issues. Firstly, it will seek to discuss the need to rethink university entry and admissions requirements and processes with intent to break the status quo that currently appears to ingrain inequality and exclusion. Secondly, the will discuss the issue of diversity and inclusion (including disability) in African universities and how this is shaping social contexts for success of the often marginalized groups. Thirdly, it will explore the concerns of social safe guards for livable and fulfilling universities. In addition, it will consider the need to rethink learning in higher education institutions in light of mounting pressure on relevance of university education. The Webinar’s audience is primarily educators including university vice chancellors, rectors, presidents, principals and deans. It will also draw together the development practitioners in education and development as well as researchers. This Webinar is part of the Transforming Higher Education Webinar series of the RUFORUM 19<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) slated in October/November in Yaounde, Cameroon.

**Program**

Time	Theme/issues of discussion	Speaker
15:00-15:05	Rethinking Learning: The 21st Century Learner: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0xa98cy-Rw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0xa98cy-Rw</a>	Nada
15:05-15:10	House-keeping issues and setting the scene	<b>Moderator</b> Prof. Ernest Molua, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Bamenda, Cameroon
15:10-15:20	Welcome remarks from RUFORUM Executive Secretary	Prof. Patrick Okori, Executive Secretary, RUFORUM, Uganda
15:20-15:30	Welcome remarks from Cameroon	Prof. Florence Uphie Chinje, Rector, Université de Ngaoundéré, Cameroon
15:30-15:50	Key Note Address “Transforming university processes, systems and learning experience”	Prof. Francis Petersen, Rector and Vice-Chancellor, University of Free State, South Africa
15:50-16:00	Q & A with Key note speaker	Audience
16:00-16:30	<b>Learning and Skills for relevance</b>	
	Rethinking learning in higher education	Dr. Jimmy Spire Ssentongo, Senior Lecturer, Makerere University, Uganda
	Skills for competitiveness and thriving in the market place	Matthias Moebius, Co-founded StartHub Africa
16:30-17:15	<b>University processes and systems</b>	
	Rethinking the entry/admissions into higher education: breaking status quo	Ariel Sánchez,

<sup>7</sup> van Damme, D. (2021). Transforming Universities for a Sustainable Future. The Promise of Higher Education: Essays in Honour of 70 Years of IAU, 431-438.

		Director of Admissions, EARTH University, Costa Rica
	Diversity and inclusion (including disability) in African Universities	TBC
	Social safe guards for livable and fulfilling universities	Prof. Justine J. Namaalwa, Head Scholars Program , Makerere University
17:15-17:30	Open Dialogue	Audience
17:30	Close	

Co-organized by:

