

RUFORUM Webinar Series (2020)

Introductory Note for Webinar 1

Date: 10 June 2020

Time: 13.30-15.30 East African Standard Time

Learning from a crisis: University leaders' response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) devastation across the world has been phenomenal in the shortest time since its outbreak in December 2019 in China. COVID-19 impacts have been felt in all spheres of the economy and global operations. Tertiary education has also seen significant interruptions. By April 2020, universities and other tertiary education institutions across 175 countries were closed affecting some 220 million learners globally. In Sub-Saharan Africa region, it has affected an estimated 98% of the all the tertiary education students as countries imposed measures aimed at containing the spread of the virus. The pandemic besides getting students off-campus has caused universities to suffer significant revenue losses in respect of accommodation, conferences, and events activity.

Further, as the lockdown and other interventions undertaken by various governments across Africa are extended and revised, events unfolding reflect a disruption on the academic calendar creating possibilities of deferring academic programmes and/or delaying the completion time. There is also a compounding timing risk that essentially reduces the potential upside of any return to 'business as usual' calling for immediate response of higher education institutions to explore alternative education arrangements. Most African universities and other tertiary education institutions have, in the space of days or weeks, moved their operations online but albeit at different levels and scale.

As universities and other tertiary education institutions respond to COVID-19 disruptions, the actions are geared towards addressing the diminished financial resources, personal and academic challenges on staff, students and institutional systems, urgent need for improved infrastructure to respond to the need for blended learning as well as remote learning approaches, limited mobility for students, staff and other staff, among others. This webinar brings together university managers: Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Principals and Deans and other Heads of tertiary education institutions to lesson learn on how they have been able to confront the immediate challenges and how they are resetting for a long-term perspective in the 'new normal'. Interactions during this webinar will hopefully lead to a consensus for strengthening

collective response and how universities can leverage from one another on the best practices and resources.

Date: 10 June 2020

Time: 1300-1500 East African Standard Time

Moderator: Prof. Christin Dranzoa, Vice Chancellor, Muni University, Arua-Uganda

Panelists

1. Hicham EL HABTI, Secretary General, Mohammed VI Polytechnique University (UM6P), Benguerir-Morocco
2. Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice Chancellor, Makerere University- Uganda
3. Prof. Francis Petersen, Vice Chancellor, University of Free State- South Africa
4. Prof. Arthur Mol, Rector Magnifus, Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR), Netherlands

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