

Ensuring Quality and Relevance of Higher Education, Life Long Learning, Teacher Education Development Through Public Private Partnership

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Introduction

I feel highly honoured to be invited to address the 15th Annual International Conference on Private Higher Education in Africa. I have observed the trajectory of development and continual popularity of this conference which was initiated by our great friend, Professor Wondwosen Tamrat, the Founder and President of St Mary's University (SMU). Given the enormous challenges experienced during the early years of this Conference, I am amazed at its tremendous growth and uptake by participants and indeed the international development partners (IDPs).

This year, no less than eight (8) IDPs have partnered with SMU signifying three things. First, that the issue of Private Higher Education and its providers can no more be ignored. It is has come to stay and it is maturing. Africa can only ignore private higher education at its own peril. Second, making higher education accessible, affordable and demystified in contrast to its elitist status of yesteryears must be the watch word in the use of education as basis for development in Africa. I am glad that the entire world, given the broad representation at this conference, through its representation of the International development partners, and indeed by the involvement of our very own the African Union Commission (AUC), and the Association of African Universities (AAU), has accepted that the priority route for the emancipation of Africa is the vigorous pursuit of the development of higher education. Third, hard work and a focus on what you believe in and practise pay on the long run, no matter the time it takes. Professor Wondwosen has demonstrated this and must be commended and indeed celebrated as one great sons of Africa whose belief in private education is taking the continent by storm. However, it is not yet *uhuru* and there is a lot more to be done in the long journey ahead of us.

The choice of the theme of the conference, given the surge in the emergence and provision of private higher education in Africa is apt and timely. It is time that we comprehensively considered the issue of quality higher education through public private partnership (PPP). The current climate of regional integration in Africa through the laudable initiatives of the African Union on higher education, which include the harmonisation of qualifications, mobility of academics, researchers and students within Africa and the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM), to mention but a few, seem to have provided the fertile ground for the seed of PPP in African higher education to thrive. I have more to say on this later.

While I would address the general theme of the conference, I wish to pitch my tent in the areas of Quality and Relevance of Higher Education with specific reference to life-long learning and teacher development within the African higher education systems. This is predicated upon my firm belief that access, affordability of higher education on the continent through massification, open distance and e-learning and long life learning cannot be fully and judiciously discussed without unpacking the related issues of quality and relevance. There is no gainsaying the fact that the import of this discussion has been brought to the fore with reference to public private partnership at this conference.

All the above have been veritably underscored by what the Commonwealth of Learning, has listed, on page 5 of its recent newsletter, *Connections: Learning for Sustainable Development*, Vol. 22, No. 2, July, 2017, as the top FOUR trends in higher education worldwide. I agree whole heartedly with COL in its assertion that: “Higher education institutions are continuously developing new programmes, delivery methodologies and policies to respond to the demands of the global labour market and the growth of new and innovative information and communication technologies.” (p.5).

It proceeded to list the following as the current trend 4 top trends:

1. Increase in blended learning programmes (best practices of traditional classroom-based learning with online and digital learning).
2. Integrating life skills into higher education (imparting training in life skills in learners to be competent in the dynamic world of work).
3. Rapid rise in micro-credentials (mini-degrees or certifications in a specific topic area that are geared towards providing hands-on training to supplement their learners' education for better employment prospects).
4. Growth and potential of mobile technology (the integration of mobile technology in higher education to increase access to education and offering learners high levels of interactivity, flexibility and personalisation).

This is what makes the theme for this year's conference quite apt and amenable to what would appear to mimic an after-dinner conversation amongst colleagues and experts in the area many of us have journeyed through, for an average of 25 years at the least. As enthusiasts and veterans in higher education, we should be able to look back telescoping our years of engagement in higher education to take stock of what has been done, where we are and where Africa should aim to be with regard to providing access to higher education in Africa through many alternative routes.

Quality is the attainment of fitness for purpose in a given situation in a systematic, reliable fashion to provide confidence to the client that accurate and reproducible results indicate that the products or services meet or exceed customer expectations.

For me, the relevance of our higher education systems should be seen and directed towards its ecological significance or consequence within the development initiatives in Africa.

In summary, what I can deduce from the theme is that there is a less-than-quiet dissatisfaction with the way and where our education in Africa is right now. There is

therefore an urgent need for a redress to make it suit our current and evolving needs as well as make it competitive or comparable with what obtains in other part of the world.

I have a feeling that we are all on the same page and indeed the same paragraph, on our views about the Theme and what should be contained in, and how we therefore wish, the conversation to proceed today. If this is the case, then all I need to do this morning is to provide some food for thought and supply the beacons to guide the conversation we shall undertake now and as we examine the various issues associated with the theme of year's conference.

I do hope therefore, that a consideration of the above as threads running through my narrative and conversation with you this afternoon should assist us to decipher what we really mean by such a heavy duty conference Theme titled **“Ensuring Quality Through Enhanced Public, Private Partnership in Private Higher Education in Africa”**.

Education and Development

There is no gainsaying the fact that Education is the propelling power of any development in any nation or community. Whether political, socio-economic and other forms of development, no nation can make any appreciable progress without recourse to education which is the pivot on which all development sit. History is replete with the account of how nations have used education to directly raise the level of the living conditions of the citizenry of a nation, catered for their economy and drastically improve the other sectors. As succinctly stated by Acemoglu and Robinson (2012), there is a clear relationship between a country's institutional

governance frameworks, economic policies, incentive structures on the one hand, and its economic progress on the other hand as determined by the education offered its people. The lack of appreciable development in Africa as compared with other continents of the world is easily adduced to the low level of attention given to education.

For all the sectors to develop adequately there must be the abundance of well developed human capital to power them. Education is the manure which fertilises human capital development. Unfortunately, the commentary on education in Africa has not been very encouraging.

In terms of funding in education and enrolment numbers, African appears to be doing well. For example, The World Bank report of 2009 informed us that between 2005 and 2007, African countries expended more funds on education more than most regions of the world. Enrolment in tertiary education has grown faster in sub-Saharan Africa than any other region over the last four decades. While there were less than 200,000 tertiary students enrolled in the region in 1970, by 2011 the number rose to about 5.1 million.

As reported by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for tertiary education in Africa grew at an average rate of 8.6% for each year between 1970 and 2008 – compared to a global average of 4.6% over the same period. Out of 26 countries reported on by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in 2010, only the Central African Republic reduced spending on education. As a result of these investments, remarkable progress has been made in educational development in sub-Saharan Africa. Between 2000 and 2008, Primary school enrolment in Africa increased by 48% – from 87 million to 129 million – between 2000 and 2008. Enrolment in pre-primary, secondary and tertiary education also

grew by more than 60% during the same period. In spite of all these, the educational system in Africa is weak in quality and quantity indicators. Hence the inability of countries in our continent to develop the human capital needed for the emancipation of the continent.

Apart from these gains reported above, Africa is under performing on a number educational indicators. For instance, the region has 43% of the world's out of school children. Nearly 29 million children of primary-school age were not in school in sub-Saharan Africa in 2011, and 54% of them were girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, about 10 million children drop out of primary school every year. It is estimated that 38% of Africa's adults, about 167 million people, lack basic literacy skills. Out of this number 60% are women. While about 1.9 million teachers will be needed in classrooms by 2015 to achieve Universal Primary Education in the whole of Africa, 1.1 million of them will be needed in sub-Saharan Africa alone (Obasanjo, 2014).

At the higher education level, the 37th General Conference of UNESCO held in October 2013, while observing an increase in access was grossly dissatisfied with the quality of graduates. A recent UNESCO survey indicated that there are FIVE main factors contributory to the low quality in higher education in Africa These include depreciating quality of teachers; research capacity deficit; inadequacies in facilities for teaching, learning and research; lack of a regional quality assurance framework and accreditation system; and slow adoption of ICT for delivering quality higher education including distance education.

What goes on in the education sector and at all levels of education does not show that our educational institutions are creating any values at all. Indeed, the values which our higher institutions had between the 60s and the early 80th have long

disappeared and all we have is a skeleton of what excellence represented in those days.

Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, has come a long way. From days of colonialism, slavery and slave trade and, zero infrastructural development as per western indicators to a continent with 54 independent countries, regional economic blocks, modest strides in educational development and the economic emancipation of the people.

In spite of all the strides mentioned above, Africa is still far from getting out of the woods. The continent is heavily threatened by economic strangulation; political instability; conflicts and terrorism; fragility of some of our nations; endemic corruption; geopolitical imbalances and hatred; huge capacity development needs; extreme poverty; a preponderance of unemployed, underemployed and unemployable youths.

The data available indicate that as at January 2015:

- over 10 million seek employment annually and that 60 per cent of the unemployed are youths.
- at least half of the 1 billion people are still illiterate. Africa has the world's highest illiteracy rates.
- Sub-Saharan Africa is home to at least 30 per cent of the world's poorest people.
- Africa has at least six out of 10 most unequal countries in the world.

In order to survive the 21st century development imperatives, some of the urgent needs of Sub-Saharan Africa include, but not limited to, the following:

- Building of very strong economic foundation;

- Economic integration regionally and continentally;
- Massive job creation;
- Embarking on effective food security measures;
- Health and environmental provisions;
- Innovations and creativity buoyed by education;
- Energy reforms and directing attention to combating climate change; and
- Massive investment in education, especially tertiary education.

The Africa we need:

Africa must pull itself out of the depressing situation of an average GDP per capita of less than \$350 in a world economy where the global GDP per capita is about \$950. Dr Akinwumi Adesina, the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), has opined that we need a

“new Africa with prosperous, sustainable and inclusive growth; one that is peaceful, secure and united, regionally integrated and globally competitive”.

The African Union Commission/the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)/the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) in a document called, *The Africa We want says* by the year 2063 there should be

- ‘created an Africa of our dreams that is prosperous, healthy, vigorous, creative and exciting’ (Versi, 2015).
- To achieve this, as has been done in other parts of the world, Africa must re-focus on using education as the fundamental and virile instrument for continental, regional and national development.

The regional status of education is not at all impressive.

- only three out of 10 Africans are in secondary school.

- One adult in three cannot read or write.
- vocational and technical education is largely neglected.
- In the higher education sector, on the average less than 10 per cent of the population are in the continent's over 800 higher education institutions,
- no African country has achieved the UNESCO-defined level of 25% participation in Higher Education,
- on the average African universities have a shortfall of 60% of researchers and teachers (Jegede, 2011; 2012 & 2014).
- Africa has about 32 million children out of school at the primary level; at least 1.2 million more teachers are needed by 2020.
- At the secondary level, Africa has 35 per cent of its teenagers in school while 750, 000 teachers are required by 2020.
- At the higher education level, while we have about 20 million in the various institutions of higher learning, Africa needs about 456,000 teachers by 2020.

The role of higher education in the growth and development of Africa cannot be over emphasised. Higher education

- remains the fulcrum upon which all other developments (be it health, agriculture, and infrastructure, etc) rest.
- is the key to diversify growing economies
- builds the human resource base; produces the employable graduates and professionals; reinforces the platform to combat diseases,
- reduce energy costs and address climate change;
- and provides the compelling argument for seeking greater participation from private sector in the collaborative development of the continent.

However, while all the afore-listed are essential for the effective development of Africa, there are enormous challenges facing the higher education sector in the realisation of the roles itemised above. The challenges

- the need to expand access, improve quality, ensure equity, provide massive access to tertiary education,
- direct serious attention to innovation and creativity,
- rejuvenate the obsolete curricula in higher education,
- replace the old dilapidated/build the new infrastructure, and inject huge funds.

The African Dilemma

In spite of the abundance of material and human resources God has endowed Africa with; we have not been able to get our act together. Several challenges have made it virtually impossible for the political and economic development of the country continent with serious negative effect on education and human capital development. Some of these challenges include poverty of leadership, political instability, lack of political will, socio-cultural differences, poor development policies and implementation. As succinctly stated by Okebukola (2015),

‘to appreciate the significance of the foregoing low socio-economic development statistics, consider the following hard facts. There is palpable hunger in the land; unemployment is high; inflation is biting; budget deficits are insufferably high; debt profile is mounting to an intolerable limit, never mind official denials; street begging is a constant; prostitution is rife; fraud and crime rates are high; the manufacturing sector is in a depressed state, with 20–25 percent capacity utilisation; infrastructure, electricity, healthcare and transportation are in poor shape.’

Needless therefore to see the reasons why our education has been in decline and has degenerated to irrelevancy to the point that it is not in any way competitive with any educational systems.

Private versus Public Universities: A Balancing Act for Transformation

We have come a very long way in the human capital development through the establishment and management of private universities in Africa. The history of private universities is closely linked to the attainment of independence by African countries and the need to provide access to a growing population of students seeking placement in tertiary institutions. As a result, there was a strong move towards public universities and a national system of education in post independent Africa.

But the monopoly of public sector institutions in higher learning came to a halt from the late 1980s to early 1990s in Africa and private sector institutions emerged as viable alternative to higher education due to the:

- Deregulation policies under the structural adjustment programmes
- Fiscal incapacity (lack of funds) of Africa countries to expand higher education through public universities
- Sharp increase in the students' enrolment at all levels and the inability of the public institutions to rapidly respond to the heavy pressure in the demands for more admission places in universities.
- Demand for employment-oriented courses and programmes to support the growth and development of nations.
- The globalisation process and the growth of knowledge economy.
- The effect and spread of technology and the rise of borderless education.
- Other factors created conducive environment form the emergence of private participation in higher education in Africa.

At present, the private sector is the fastest expanding segment of higher education in Africa. Numerically, private universities now surpass public universities in Africa. As at 2003, Africa had 63 private universities. By 2015, although the records are not accurate, we had over 250; today we have close to 400 and still counting. Nigeria alone has over 75 private universities. As noted in the literature, while East Africa enjoys the fastest rate of growth in Africa even though it terms of numbers, West Africa has the highest number of private universities in Africa. In general, the private universities are small in size, and offer market-friendly courses in a limited number of programme areas.

Many African countries have centralised regulatory and accreditation and qualifications frameworks to which all universities including private universities compulsorily conform with. Private University registration and establishment has well laid down-regulations that are rigorously applied in some African countries.

However, there are still a large number of private institutions which operate illegally in many African countries and Nigeria has the worst case of this phenomenon. If a lasting solution is not found to root out these illegal universities, transformation will be very difficult to achieve.

For a fact, private universities have their advantages and contributions to the national economy. These include:

- Tremendous contribution in meeting the unmet demands for university education.
- Production of needed human resources to service some critical sectors of the economy.
- The fact that although students have lower-level academic profile than those in public universities, their outcome academic performance, in general, is better.

- Low drop-out rates and high graduation rates.
- They have highly motivated students and high employment rates
- They have altered the concept of university education from a supermarket model to a boutique model offering limited but well catered for courses.

All over the world, private universities have continued to fill a void in the national educational system. As mentioned earlier, the number of private universities is on the increase, just as the number of issues and challenges keep increasing. Some of these include:

1. Inadequacies in the legal provisions for the establishment of private universities.
2. Quality and number of staff and preponderance of part-time staff who moonlight.
3. Lack of or limited infrastructure and equipment
4. High cost of fees making private education unaffordable to a large segment of the population. It creates its own elitism.
5. Academic interest and courses not necessary motivated by national philosophy but private needs and financial considerations.
6. Courses requiring less investment in terms of infrastructure and other facilities.
7. For now, teaching is the main function carried out by many of the private universities. Research is rarely emphasised.
8. In some countries, private universities may contribute to weakening public universities through student and staff attrition/poaching.
9. Rapid expansion of the higher education system reduces quality of teaching, research and promotional criteria.
10. Low salaries in public universities as compared with private universities.

From the above, **three** major issues are centrally implicated with regard to the provision of private higher education in Africa. They are: **Quality of higher education, the type and medium of educational provision, and the provision and training of teachers.** Due to time, space and the fact that many colleagues and organisations at this conference with superior expertise in these areas are around and would have presented or be presenting excellent views, facts and supporting evidence, all that is left for me is to briefly direct attention to salient aspects of these issues needing urgent and priority attention in the meteoric rise of the provision of private higher education in Africa. Let us now turn our attention to addressing the three issues.

Quality of Higher Education

I have mentioned, in at least two sections above, the displeasure people have raised with the issue of quality in higher education in Africa. The reports of UNESCO have been particularly indicting of the poor quality of our higher education. If we say that the quality of higher education is low, the concern about the embarrassingly poor quality of private higher education as offered by some institutions of higher learning in Africa is definitely unacceptable. There is ample evidence in Africa indicating that private providers of education have helped to make education more accessible but they have also pointed out that it 'has not meant an improvement in the quality of education provided by the institutions. As such, private universities have had no significant impact on the improvement of quality of education' (Mgaiwa & Poncian, 2016; Samiyu, 2013).

All efforts need to be made to improve on the quality offered by the private universities in Africa in order to gain the confidence of the people, especially parents who wish to send their children there and employers who are most

interested in the quality of their products and credibility to fit into the work environment. Coincidentally, this is coming at a time when the African Union is undertaking a variety of initiatives in higher education in Africa at a time when the issue of harmonization of African higher education and mutual recognition of degrees and academic qualifications. One concrete solution currently being established in Africa with regards to improving internal quality assurance mechanisms and enhance the effectiveness of teaching, learning and research is the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM).

The AQRM, which was approved by the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union in 2007, was pilot tested in 2010 and validated in 2014 using nine universities across the continent. With the potential of being a very good instrument for all institutions of higher learning to deploy in institutional self assessment with the sole purpose of promoting the improvement of the quality of higher education institutions in Africa, the African Union Commission and the Association of African Universities (AAU) supported by the European Union are currently using the instrument in 15 self-nominated universities across the five regions of Africa. The 15 universities include private universities whose results would be closely watched to determine the efficacy of the instrument in their special situation. When the AQRM begins to be used in all the institutions of higher learning especially private universities, then the road to ensuring that quality services are rendered to the people of Africa would have taken firm roots in our higher education system.

The Type and Medium of Educational Provision

Given the exponential increase in the world's population and the corresponding dwindling of funding in education, it has become imperative that we seek the most

efficient and effective type and medium of providing education to the teeming masses without compromising on quality. This has led the world to the use of open and distance learning which has metamorphosed through many stages since the 16th century.

Distance and open learning as a form of human resource development has come a long way. It has transcended various chronological landmarks and transformation in nomenclature. When in 1728, Caleb Philipps of Boston, USA decided to teach Short Hand by post, or in 1833 when the study of composition was offered by post in Sweden, or in 1843 when Isaac Pitman began teaching Short Hand through the post in the United Kingdom (see Battenberg, 1971; Holmberg, 1989) little did they or anyone of their time realise the enormous revolution this method of teaching and learning will have on the world.

Known differently and variously as ‘correspondence study’, ‘home study’, ‘off-campus study’, ‘independent study’, ‘distance study’, ‘telematic teaching’, ‘extra-mural system’, what we now call distance and open learning has meant the same for everyone in the world. This is the provision of education by a mode other than the conventional face to face method but whose goals are similar to, and just as noble and practical as those of on-campus full-time, face to face education. Keegan (1986) has provided a classical definition of distance education in which among other characteristics mentions the quasi-separation of teacher and learner, the use of the media, the provision of two-way communication, and the quasi-permanent absence of the learning group. In contemporary times, open and distance learning (ODL) has come onto the scene. Open education essentially differs from distance education because it operates on open access, and the removal of restrictions, exclusions and privileges which make distance education a ‘closed’ system. Open education and

distance education could be said to be at either end of the continuum of non-contiguous education (Rumble, 1989).

The history and evolution of distance education has been marked by three main issues (Gough, 1980). The first is access: to allow students who would otherwise be denied educational opportunities to gain access to courses. The second is equivalence and integrity: students taught at a distance should receive an equivalent education and an equivalent qualification with the same integrity as those earned through the conventional mode. The third is excellence: quest for excellence in quality of learning materials, teaching, support services, academic and administrative systems or professional development of staff. As the resolution of these issues continue to dominate the theory and practice of distance and open learning, many countries in the world, especially those developing, became increasingly attracted to this form of education.

The explosion of knowledge and coming unto the mainstream of open and distance learning provides an effective means for mass higher education, access and equity, cost-effectiveness using efficient system of delivery, flexible, fast and yet fluid provision of education, and the elimination of distance and isolation of the learner from the institution, teacher and peer. Open and distance learning is changing within a larger global environment that is also changing in a number of ways. First, the world has moved from an industrial-based economy to an information-based one in which knowledge is seen as more profitable than capital services. Second, the need to transmit the high volume of information and knowledge being generated in an emerging information-based economy has led to the phenomenal development being witnessed in the area of communication. This development in information and communication technologies has transformed how, where, and what is communicated at a speed far greater than what was imagined a few months ago. As a

result, the variety of technologies available for transmitting information has changed the world's view of what information and communications are. It has globalised information and has brought world economies to the doorsteps of even the remotest farmer.

These recent developments in technology as mentioned above have two facets which are now transforming teaching and learning. A few years ago we saw the emergence of affordable, portable, personal computers laden with multimedia capabilities. Next was the availability of networking, which allows global contact asynchronously or synchronously. These have unleashed a tidal wave of unlimited growth of the Internet, which has made the use of the Web in open and distance learning, and teaching possible. The indications are that we have not even scratched the surface of the tremendous potential of its use in instruction.

The following are some of the forces which encourage open and distance education

- rapid growth and obsolescence of knowledge and skills
- varied learning styles of students and varied locations from the institution
- timely education and training for national human resources which are treated as 'capital'
- accessible to a variety of people especially those who are disadvantaged, under-privileged and under-represented
- financial pressures faced by students and institutions
- availability and affordability of emerging information technologies for efficient and effective delivery of instruction.

All the factors, especially ICT, which contribute to the emergence of open and distance learning have also made it necessary and possible to have life long learning.

As can be seen from Figure 1, Life long learning is the use of flexible and easily accessible mode to make learning a continuous lifelong activity. It allows a person to cope with the constant changes in life by acquiring knowledge ‘on the go’. The need to successfully manage our daily living in today’s world calls for making learning a continuing lifelong activity and thereby leads to the development of a ‘Learning’ or ‘Knowledge Society’.

Lifelong learning is not a privilege or a right but a necessity for every individual. Lifelong learning will become the norm rather than the exception as a means of getting the whole society to learn continuously – from “cradle to the grave” as some would say.

Africa has got such an effective tool that could be used to make education accessible and freely available to all and to be done all through one’s life time with limited dislocation to one’s life style, location and engagement.

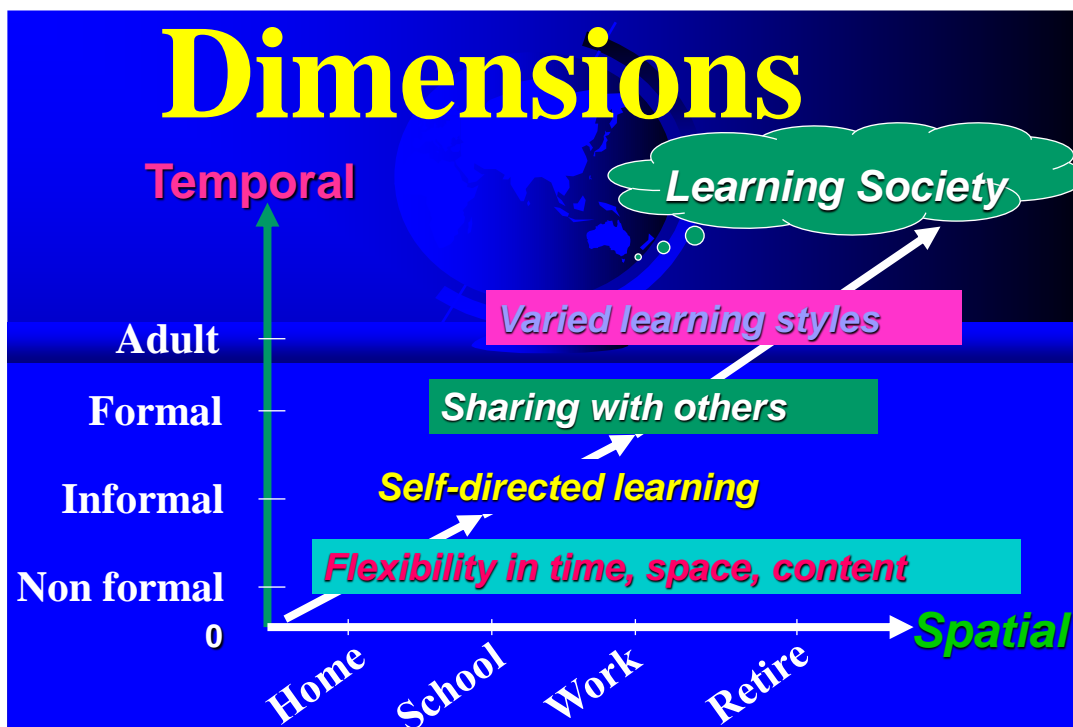


Figure 1: Lifelong Learning Activities, Type and Mode

The Provision and Training of Teachers

No matter how well conceived or designed and educational system is, without an adequate, qualified and effective pool of teachers, the whole success comes to nought. Teachers are the engine room of any educational system and the ultimate determinants of the progress made in the growth and development of a country.

In order to realise the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) goals the Dakar Framework for Action, 2000 emphatically stated that:

“Teachers are essential players in promoting quality education, whether in schools or in more flexible community-based programmes; they are advocates for, and catalysts of, change. No education reform is likely to succeed without the active participation and ownership of teachers”.

According to a document released by UNESCO on October 2 to commemorate the 2015 anniversary, Sub Sahara Africa faces the biggest challenge, “with a total of 2.7 million teachers needed in schools” even now. And for every 100 children of school age existing today, the report estimates that there will be 142 in 2030.”

The document also says that, ‘As a result, countries across the region will need to create 2.2 million new teaching positions by 2030, while filling about 3.9 million positions, the report noted. The report goes further to say that Nigeria; the most populous African country would require a total of 1.4 million teachers by 2030.

As mentioned earlier, at the higher education level, while we have about 20 million in the various institutions of higher learning, Africa needs about 456,000 teachers by 2020. This figure is a bit on the conservative side if we consider the surge in the establishment of private universities and the fact that every month; at least two private universities are added to the number!

Producing enough teachers for Africa by 2030 to fully implement the provision ambitious higher education programme would appear to be a very tall order given the limited time, lack of resources and lack of interest in people taking up teaching as a profession. This is not to say that nothing is being done. One of the sponsors of this conference, The UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), was established in 1999 with the mandate to strengthen the capacities of teacher education institutions of its 54 member States. IICBA must be commended for the great and extensive work it has been doing since its inception. But it does appear that something revolutionary and in a massive scale needs to be done to rescue Africa from the never ending cycle of dearth of teachers in her educational system. This is where the public-private partnership in education in Africa requires more than a cursory look that it currently gets.

Public-Private Partnership in African Higher Education

According to the World Bank Group, a **public-private partnership (PPP, 3P or P3)** as "a long-term contract between a private party and a government entity, for providing a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility, and remuneration is linked to performance".

According to the literature, the PPP approach began as a result of pressure to change the standard model of public procurement because of the level of public debt, which grew rapidly during the macroeconomic dislocation of the 1970s and 1980s. As a result, governments encouraged private investment in infrastructure, initially on the basis of accounting fallacies arising from the fact that public accounts did not distinguish between recurrent and capital expenditures.

PPP, which was initially for the infrastructural industry, has different types which include the following:

- **O&M: Operations and Maintenance**
- **OMM: Operations, Maintenance & Management**
- **DB: Design-Build**
- **DBM: Design-Build-Maintain**
- **DBO: Design-Build-Operate**
- **DBOM: Design-Build-Operate-Maintain**
- **DBFOM: Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain**
- **DBFOMT: Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain-Transfer**
- **BOT: Build-Operate-Transfer**
- **BOO: Build-Own-Operate**
- **BBO: Buy-Build-Operate**
- **Developer Finance**
- **EUL: Enhanced Use Leasing or Underutilized Asset**
- **LDO or BDO: Lease-Develop-Operate or Build-Develop-Operate**
- **Lease/Purchase**
- **Sale/Leaseback**
- **Tax-Exempt Lease**
- **Turnkey**

Applied to education, PPP typically involve the following:

- Management, professional, support services (input)
- Operational services (process)
- Education services (outputs)
- Facility availability (inputs)
- Facility availability and education services (both inputs and outputs)

In almost all the countries of Africa, the private sector plays an important role in the provision of education, including the tertiary level where the access is widening considerably. There is hardly any African country where private universities are not present. In a number of countries there are more private universities than public ones and the indication is that this will continue to be the trend in the near future. However, what is lacking in many of the countries is an organised way of managing the growth and development of private universities. Not every country has got a regulatory system in place. There is indeed the need for a continent-wide provision for this.

African countries might need to consider three very important issues with regard to designing and implementing public-private partnerships in education. The first one is for all African governments to provide an effective policy and regulatory mechanism for private sector participation in the provision of educational services. The second issue is to ensure that the laws provide very clear guidelines on the quality assurance systems, and the profit sharing mechanism. The third is for government to provide in very clear terms the incentives for private participation in higher education. The reason for the provision of incentives is that although the private providers are there for the profit in the PPP arrangements, they must ensure that the quality of their services and products do not fall below certain minimum guaranteeing that the services and products between the public and private universities are comparable.

In order to entrench quality and relevance in African higher education promoting life long learning and effective teacher education development through Public-Private Partnership, Africa needs to be mindful of a number of factors as follows:

1. Developing a culture of sustainability

Developing a culture of sustainability underlines the importance of balancing economic efficiency, social equity, and environmental accountability. It appears that in this 21st Century everything must have sustainable in it. It ranges from sustainable development to sustainable economic growth, sustainable communities to sustainable energy production.

Donald Kaberuka (May, 2015), in his valedictory speech as the outgoing President, to the annual general meeting of the AfDB has perfectly summarised how finance and partnerships should interplay in the dreams to fully develop Africa. He says that

SDGs will be largely funded through economic growth and transformation; through trade and investments; through sustained domestic efforts; domestic resource mobilisation; local capital markets; minimising illicit flows; better financial management; leveraging natural resources; and of course, smarter use of aid". The CAP must be used as a veritable instrument for educational transformation of Africa.

Sustainable development depends on good governance and good governance also depends on appropriate institutions. Formulation of policies cannot ensure effective implementation in the absence of good governance, which in turn cannot be achieved in the absence of appropriate institutions. Hence, sustainable development requires good policies and effective provision of institutions conducive to good governance. Good governance is conditional for achieving sustainability. Sustainability is 'a higher-order social goal or fundamental property of natural or human systems'. It can also be conceived as a fundamental principle to guide human conduct with respect to natural systems.

2. Embed Value Creation in our Higher Education

Given the enormity of the challenges facing education in Africa and the huge investment needed, financing development, as appropriately and sufficiently as it deserves, is the only way to guarantee sustainability.

But the financing requirements of Africa continues to grow very large in the face of disappearing donor support, global economic meltdown and serious crisis, unacceptable dwindling local revenue levels that is punctuated by wanton corrupt, and fraudulent practices.

The only sensible thing to embark upon now by Africa countries is to ensure that we integrate our education, which is a means towards human capital development, with value creation. Our new educational system which must be entrepreneurial in outlook and implementation must create and deliver something of value that other people want or need at a price they're willing to pay, in a way that satisfies the customer's needs and expectations.

In order to raise the relevance of our educational system, we need to use corporate governance vehicle especially the aspects which relate to value creation in our public-private partnership. Our educational system must be radically transformed into one which seeks to promote accountability, transparency / openness, stewardship, efficiency and leadership.

3. Extend the Frontiers of Community Service

Tertiary institutions in Africa have always chorused the tripod of teaching, research and community service. But our community service has very little to write home about. **Tertiary institutions must genuinely engage the community to find lasting irreversible solutions to poverty eradication**, people-centred and planet-sensitive agenda to address the universal challenges of the 21st century: promoting sustainable development, supporting job creating growth, protecting the environment and providing peace, security, justice, freedom and equity at all levels. These must be included in the PPP policy and regulatory laws.

4. The Word now is Partnership

Transforming our educational system for relevance and quality requires a new form of partnership. The transformation would require partnerships with many actors, unified behind a common agenda. It must encourage national and local governments to work with the private sector and civil society to align their efforts behind sustainable development.

The only sensible thing to embark upon now by Africa countries is to seek new partnerships and private investments to help deliver transformational education. Such partnerships will ensure that too much strain is not brought to bear on the financial resources of the various countries but will attract additional private capital to support development. All these should be enshrined in the policy and regulatory laws governing the establishment and managing of private universities and other tertiary institutions in Africa.

The models of the public-private partnerships to be used include:

- (i) supporting governments with funds from the private sector through special taxes into an education fund,
- (ii) encouraging private sector to establish institutions using laid down framework and regulations of government,
- (iii) inviting the private sector to directly fund the development of infrastructure on campuses and give scholarships for mission-critical programmes,
- (iv) enabling wealthy individuals and public-spirited organisations to establish or participate in higher education, and
- (v) providing conducive environment to attract all shapes and sizes of investors but with preferential regulatory frameworks to give priority to investors interested in educational development.

Conclusion

In a globalised 21st century technology-dependent world, sub-Saharan Africa requires a progressive education that lives on knowledge economy, quality and relevance within an academic community that would enforce national and continental regulatory frameworks including public-private partnership. Higher education in Africa must develop multi-skilled and multi-tasked educated persons who subscribe to advancing their careers through research, within the overall terrain of comprehensive transformation of Africa. The only way to the future is for African governments to engage the private sector and willing individuals and organisations in partnerships to establish, manage and finance higher education.

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