




The Role of Universities in Promoting Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

A African Universities Need to First Put their Houses in Order

- a) Lack of vision/policy direction as emphasis tends to be basic education
- b) Lack of political will/mistrust between governments and universities


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- c) Limited financial resources (from government and student fees)
 - d) Poor management capacity
 - e) Brain drain (universities abroad, international organisations)
 - f) A substantial number of African universities are collapsing



B What African Universities can Do Under the Circumstances

B1: Cross-Cutting Themes


- a) Universities to tailor their programmes to national development
- b) Universities should evaluate/include realistic MDG targets in their strategic plans
- c) Policy development/exploiting university expertise

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- d) Research and development
 - e) Bridging the gap between knowledge producers and practitioners/policy makers
 - f) Outreach/civic education
 - g) Curriculum design for all levels of the system
 - h) Spear heading good governance / enlightened leadership
 - i) Strengthen ties with professional bodies



B2: Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger

- a) Promotion of social mobility through:
 - . Support for lower levels of education to enlarge training opportunities
 - . Affirmative action to facilitate entry of disadvantaged groups into the more competitive areas of study
 - . Affirmative action to support retention of disadvantaged groups in higher education institutions

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- . Continuing education/alternative delivery programmes for working persons (distance education, weekend study, short-courses, etc)


 - b) Promoting economic growth through:
 - . Increased labour productivity
 - . Expanding choices of study (ICT, etc)
 - . Improving relevance of skills' taught


 - c) Improved governance/Accountability



B3: Achievement of Universal Primary Education

- a) Challenging conventional delivery systems and beliefs
- b) Curriculum design/modification
- c) Development of reading materials
- d) Review of inspection and advisory services
- e) Designing systems that promote improved use of available resources/sustainability

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- f) Designing systems that address needs of minorities
 - g) Improving testing systems
 - h) Pre and in-service teacher training
 - i) Training of school management teams
 - j) Advocacy/dissemination of good ideas and practices


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- k) Using university students for teaching, research, health support, outreach, etc.


 - l) Strengthening programmes which promote teaching of local languages, cultures and local expert knowledge



B4: Promoting Gender Equity/Women Empowerment


- a) Affirmative action related to entry/retention (bonus points, bursaries, maternity programmes)
- b) Promoting women's involvement in institutional governance (administration)
- c) Support female quality improvement programmes at the primary and secondary levels

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- d) Start/strengthen gender focussed research/teaching programmes
 - e) Introduce flexible modes of instruction (part-time, short courses, credit transfers)
 - f) Recruit and promote female faculty



**B5: Health Promotion
(Reduce Child Mortality;
Improve Maternal Health;
Combat HIV/Aids, Malaria and Other
Diseases)**


- a) Mounting/strengthening outreach/public health campaigns
- b) Investing in research programmes targeting specific epidemics (HIV/Aids, malaria, etc)
- c) Start/strengthen Aids Control Units in university/activities to trickle down

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- d) Exploring the potential of local medical solutions/collaboration with indigenous practitioners
 - e) Identifying through research appropriate / affordable curative and preventive health care



B6: Enhancing Environmental Sustainability


- a) Involving academics/researchers on all commissions and authorities dealing with environmental issues as consultants for expert opinion
- b) Involving academics in awareness creation especially at the community level given the high calling placed on them at those levels as opinion leaders, mentors and role models

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- c) Facilitating development of relevant literature in environmental sustainability to suit all relevant groups
 - d) Strategic training and upgrading of knowledge for all categories of environmental officers



B7: Promoting Global Partnerships for Development


- a) Inter-university (teaching and research) between the North and South
- b) The virtual university/promotion of IT based on institutional strengths
- c) Supporting regional level graduate programmes
- d) Coordinating overseas training to reflect major human resource needs


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- e) Support academics to participate in international and regional meetings to benefit from emerging knowledge
 - f) Promoting/exporting students to e-trade
 - g) Promoting student/youth exchange/tours for international exposure
 - h) Spearheading research on innovations that could be exploited for commercially
 - i) Equip students with skills that enhance self-reliance/entrepreneurial skills



C: Way Forward: Improving the Capacity of African Universities To Deliver

- a) Dialogues involving all stakeholders on what universities can do/how they should do it in partnership with relevant groups/organisations
- b) Expand the financial base for improved infrastructure and other learning inputs
- c) Curriculum design/monitoring of programmes to reflect changing needs

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- d) Mounting effective systems of selecting students
 - e) Recruitment, promotion, retention of the best academics
 - f) Strengthening post-graduate training
 - g) Staff development (academic and administrative)
 - h) Investment in research (by governments, the private sector, external partners)

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- i) Investment in lower levels of the education system
 - j) Coordinating higher education development to address national goals
 - k) Exploring mechanisms for involving relevant non-academics in teaching and research programmes