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African Universities and Internationalization

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Editorial

Even though internationalization of higher education is not a new phenomenon, it is now agreed that in recent decades it has grown in greater proportions and impacted in various ways on higher education systems and institutions all over the world. Higher education in Africa has not been exempt from the influence of internationalization and this issue will explore how internationalization impacts upon higher education on this continent and how this impact might be different from that elsewhere on the globe.

This issue of Higher Education Policy recognizes the growing importance of internationalization of higher education and thus the need for more empirical-based knowledge in this field, especially from Africa. Although the significance of internationalization to developing economies such as those in Africa cannot be gainsaid, the impact of its challenges, threats and risks can also not be understated. As it grows in scope and impact, its almost inevitable effects warrant close scrutiny.

About the Issue

This issue has six papers focusing on the central theme, five of which are contributions by members of the newly established African Network for Internationalization of Education (ANIE), an independent, membership-based non-profit making, non-governmental African network committed to the advancement of research, capacity building and advocacy on the international dimension of higher education in Africa. ANIE, whose secretariat is based at Moi University, Kenya, is a result of the book project on Higher Education in Africa: The International Dimension, which came out in 2008. Three of the papers in this volume are contributions by members of the Network of Emerging Scholars on Internationalization, a capacity development initiative of ANIE to support young African scholars with an interest in internationalization.

The contributions cover a range of issues on internationalization. In the first of these, James Jowi provides a broader context for the understanding of the international dimension of higher education in Africa. The paper begins with a historical rendition and

proceeds to discuss the new developments in internationalization of higher education in Africa. It discusses the implications of internationalization in Africa and presents some views on policy implications. In the second paper, McLellan explores the internationalization policies of South Africa's higher education system and its potential for promoting internationalization of higher education in South Africa. The paper argues that even though South Africa has comparatively proactive internationalization policies, which include among others, policies on the recognition of ethnic and racial diversity, the experiences of African International Students in most post-apartheid South African universities indicate that the practice is not closely aligned with the policies. The following paper by Philip Ayoo examines the double-edged role of Information and communication technology (ICT) as a facilitator and at the same time a potential risk to the internationalization of higher education in Africa. The paper points into the dilapidated ICT infrastructures in most African universities and the new initiatives being undertaken in this field, which could be utilized for engagements in internationalization. It demonstrates how the digital divide that exists within the process of internationalization risks increasing the gap between African higher education and the international community if efforts are not made to bridge it. Quality continues to be a problematic and elusive issue not only in the international dimension of higher education in Africa but within the entire system. Olusola Oyewole's paper interrogates the complex quality issues that internationalization poses to higher education in Africa. It recognizes that while internationalization has the potential to improve the quality of curriculum, students, programmes, staff and facilities in higher education systems, it could also portend negative effects, especially in contexts such as Africa, where there are comparatively weaker regulatory mechanisms in place. In elucidating this, the paper presents some experiences across countries. Ibrahim Oanda's paper addresses a similar theme, but opens up a new frontier on the impetus of regionalization and other pan-African efforts on internationalization of higher education. The paper presents an overview of the two processes and discusses the emergence of coordinated regional efforts as a new way to promote internationalization of higher education in Africa.

The concluding thematic paper by Milton Obamba and Jane Kimbwarata analyses the new developments and potentials of academic partnerships and collaborations between African universities and the rest of the world. On the other hand, and linked to the complexity, dynamic nature and unequal standpoints in the partnerships, the paper points out that such partnerships are embedded with varying configurations of power and resource flow asymmetries and geopolitics with varying consequences for higher education in the developing economies.

The issue is completed by another paper on higher education in Africa, but not addressing internationalization explicitly. Christine Kanyengo addresses the challenges posed to libraries by massification in African higher education. She discusses and evaluates the measures taken at the University of Zambia to address these challenges.

Internationalization of Higher Education in Africa: Developments, Emerging Trends, Issues and Policy Implications

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Abstract

Higher education the world over has now become part of the globalization process and can no longer be strictly viewed from a national context. The realities of internationalization of higher education and its attendant impacts on the sector is an urgent priority for higher education, especially in developing economies such as Africa. This paper analyses the complex process of internationalization, its manifestations and current developments as well as the main challenges it poses to higher education in Africa. It illustrates the peculiar historical and political contexts of African higher education, the diverse national, regional and international actors, dominant rationales, challenges, risks and their implications for policy. The paper argues that, Africa, just like other regions of the world, or even each country of the world, approaches internationalization in a way that reflects its history, culture and context and in a way consistent with its current needs, priorities and circumstances. While there are areas of dissimilarity between Africa and other world regions, relating to rationales, risks, challenges and even opportunities, internationalization is a worldwide phenomenon that may require increased regional and international cooperation accompanied with workable policies, strategies and ethical standards.

Internationalization and its Implications for the Quality of Higher Education in Africa

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Abstract

African countries and other least developed countries could use knowledge to narrow the income gap between them and the developed world economies. Higher education (HE) is an important institution that these countries will need to develop and improve in order to meet this challenge. The world of HE is however changing everyday, and one of the major forces imparting and shaping HE at this time is internationalization. The author identifies the various manifestations of the process of internationalization and the rationales driving it in some selected African countries. A hypothetical evaluation of the implication of internationalization for quality in the African higher educational systems is presented. Internationalization has the potential for improving the quality of curriculum, students, programs, staff and facilities in HE systems. However, in some regions of Africa, where there are no appropriate regulatory mechanisms in place,

internationalization can become a threat to the quality of HE through the activities of dubious international providers, dubious learners and commercial and internet degree mills.

Internationalization vs Regionalization of Higher Education in East Africa and the Challenges of Quality Assurance and Knowledge Production

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Abstract

Internationalization of higher education in East Africa raises various questions related to its magnitude and intensity, its capacity to address issues of access, equity and regional research and developmental needs. Internationalization and regionalization as processes in higher education can synergize each other but can also limit the success of the other depending on their focus. In East Africa, internationalization has mainly involved new forms of provision of higher education and not necessarily relevant content. At the same time, regional approaches in the context of wider Pan-African concerns on the implications of internationalization in the continent are at play. This paper gives an overview of the two processes. A discussion of the challenges that internationalization of higher education has to regional quality assurance and knowledge production in east Africa is presented.