Kenya: Building the University Sector of the Future

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Commission for University Education

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Introduction

- Kenya has attached great interest in education as a stimulant for economic and social development since 1963.
- Higher Education in Kenya has gone through a trajectory dating back in 1922 when the then Makerere College in Uganda was established as a technical college that was then expanded to meet the needs of the three East Africa;
- In 1963, the Royal Technical College became the University College, Nairobi, with less than 40 students;
- Four decades later, there are a total of seventy (70) universities - thirty eight (38) privately established and thirty two (32) public universities (CUE, 2015), with 539,000 students enrolled.
The growth of the university sector in Kenya, has therefore witnessed explosive progression;

- This is largely attributed to the liberalization of the higher education industry;
- Increasing number of secondary school graduates qualifying to join universities annually;
- An evidently growing population;

Kenya has a university student population of over 539,000 compared to only 80,000 ten years ago;

- Of this about 90% of the students are in public, while a paltry 10% are in private universities;
- Pointing to a policy dilemma; that 38 Universities have less students that the biggest public university;
The demand for University enrolment in Kenya has been growing rapidly, especially in public universities with 30% of students (50,000) who qualify for university entrance annually not able to obtain places either in public or private universities;

Ironically the TVET sector which should be absorbing some of these students is not very popular;

TVET Institutions converted into Universities;

Many working Kenyans who missed their first chance of university education are actively seeking for a second chance of university education;

One would think that with this kind of background, private universities would attract students and grow into large and vibrant institutions;

While some have done this; many are struggling.
Vision 2030 emphasis on:

- Increased access, equity, quality and relevance of education...
- Production of more graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics/Medicine (STEM) and Innovation;
- Use of technology (ICT) in distance learning and e-learning to mitigate lack of adequate infrastructure at universities;
- This could also free university resources to focus on national dev goals;
- Increased production of PhD graduates to improve student-staff ratio.
- This is vision for much of Africa...
Snapshot of Kenyan University Education

- Overall Total Degrees Awarded
- Current Overall Enrolments Universities
- Overall Students Capacity Universities
- Total First-Time Student Admissions
- KCSE Results with C+
- KCSE Candidates
- KCPE Candidates

2014
2015
Introduction

- The Commission for University Education was established by an Act of Parliament, Universities Act, No. 42 of 2012;
- As the successor to the Commission for Higher Education which was established under Universities Act Cap 210B of 1985;
- This was to address the need to regulate, coordinate and assure quality in university education as a result of growth and expansion of the university subsector in Kenya;
- Previously only private universities regulated, now all;
- Three aspects of key concern
  - Quality
  - Relevance
  - Access
## Student Enrolment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PUBLIC</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>PRIVATE</th>
<th></th>
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<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sub Total</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BACHELORS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>244,47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>163,371</td>
<td>32,355</td>
<td>33,730</td>
<td>66,085</td>
<td>473,930</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>POSTGRADUATE</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DIPLOMA</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>1,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MASTERS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27,452</td>
<td>18,163</td>
<td>45,615</td>
<td>4,589</td>
<td>4,327</td>
<td>8,916</td>
<td>54,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOCTORATE</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,223</td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>6010</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>6,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>276,81</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>183,621</td>
<td>37,934</td>
<td>38,625</td>
<td>76,559</td>
<td>536,997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Staff Establishment by Rank and Gender

**Staff Establishment by Gender in Public & Private Universities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sub Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ass. Professor</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>1,173</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>1,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>3,772</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>5,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Lecturer</td>
<td>2,271</td>
<td>1,196</td>
<td>3,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8,342</td>
<td>3,604</td>
<td>11,946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
But what is the economy looking for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Popular programs at Universities</th>
<th>Highest growth economic sectors in 2013*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Business/Administration - 17.1%</td>
<td>1. Construction – 13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Education (arts) - 16.8%</td>
<td>2. Finance and insurance – 9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Humanities and Arts - 9.2%</td>
<td>3. Human health / Social work – 8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teacher Education/ Edu science - 9.1%</td>
<td>4. ICT – 8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Health and welfare - 5.3%</td>
<td>5. Water supply, sewer treatment – 7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economic survey, 2014
➢ The Country has a situation where there people without jobs and jobs without people;
➢ Manpower lacking and needed in Engineering, Medicine/Health, architecture, planning, Sciences, ICT, and computer science;
➢ Universities unable to launch programs in these areas due to lack of qualified staff and physical infrastructure;
➢ General lack of teaching staff in all areas owing to rapid expansion of the sector;
➢ Reliance on Part time staff...Internal and external
➢ Has implications for Quality...
Enrolment of Bachelors Students by Program

- Education (Arts)
- Education (Science)
- Education (Humanities and Arts)
- Education (Humanities and Social Science)
- Education (Humanities and Information)
- Education (Humanities and Administration)
- Business and Administration
- Science and physical science
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Computing
- Engineering
- Manufacturing
- Architecture
- Veterinary
- Security and conflict resolution
- Environment
- Agriculture, forestry and fisheries
- Life Science and physical science
- Male
- Female
- Total
- %

ISO 9001:2008 Certified
The appetite for postgraduate studies has drastically increased in the recent past;

The number of supervisors has not matched the sudden increase;

Physical Facilities under strain;

Culture of mentorship... Not well developed and supported

Thereby compromising quality and completion rates;

Supervision skills needed!!!
1. Financing of University Education

- Public Universities have historically been relying on Government for funding;
- But student Numbers kept Increasing;
- Financing is uniform for all courses, thereby reducing incentives for Universities to invest in expensive technology based programs;
- Since the 1990s, Universities started Parallel/PSSP programs to augment income;
- Large numbers of campuses opened to support this model of tuition;
- Some private universities have tried to follow suit; System still in favour of public Universities;
- In doing this neither the capacities available, more the needs of the country have been put in consideration;
- Raising Quality issues and is thought to be contributing to unemployment
2. Governance and Leadership

- Kenya is a multiparty democracy where government is trying to create a more open and less fearful society;
- That is transparent in its practice, decentralized in its style, accountable in its procedures, meritocratic in recruitment, efficient in the use of resources and relevant in its objectives and outcomes;
- These measures have positively impacted on the University sector;
- There has been a move towards greater autonomy of the universities in the management of their internal affairs;
- And the removal of the somewhat autocratic culture that generally prevailed in the past;
- While in the past each public university had its own act, now all universities are governed by the universities act.
- Private Universities have been struggling to align their structures to the new act; interference among the organs is rampant;
- Socially, the country is experiencing increased educational levels, partly owing to the demands of an increasingly sophisticated economy.
- Moreover, freedom of expression is rampant in the country, and the citizens are free to question anything that does not seem to make sense to them.
- Universities in Kenya are faced with numerous challenges that include, large student nos/rapid expansion, reduced government funding, gender inequality, ethnicity, low research productivity, and students living in poor conditions.
- Mwiria (2007) perceives governance to be the most critically needed area of reform in the management of universities in Kenya.
3. **Alignment with the National Visions/development agenda**

- The Kenyan blueprint Vision 2030 aims to ensure that Kenya becomes a newly industrialized middle income country by 2030.
- Economic growth can only be achieved through technological progress because technology is a key pillar for economic development;
- Kenya is not producing enough human resource in STEM as currently only 13% of graduates from Universities are from STEM courses.
- So while there is an acute shortage of manpower in the engineering and medical fields, Universities are training students in Business, Education (arts) and Arts and humanities, who constitute 74% of all students enrolled.
- This is because the later courses are *easy and cheap* to mount, but many of the graduates in these fields are facing serious unemployment.
- How do we align University Education with national development aspirations?
4. Publications and Research productivity

- The Universities are required not only to teach and train but also to conduct research and publish;
- Research is the backbone of every economy as it fosters economic growth through informing policy on key areas of the economy;
- Currently Kenya produces about a paltry 2000 papers in peer reviewed journals per year (South Africa 20,000);
- In the recently agreed harmonization criteria on appointment and promotion, research publications in peer reviewed journals of academic staff will be assessed when appointing or promoting staff;
- The scenario at our local universities now is that younger members of academic staff prefer to spend more time teaching in several universities, than to research and publish;
- This is critically affecting the quality of teaching and ranking of universities.

- How can we improve the number and quality of publications and research productivity?
  - Paper
  - Technologies
  - Innovations
5. Masters and PhD Enrolment/completion rates

- The country has less than 10,000 PhD Holders, and requires 1000 PhDs per year in order to narrow the student to lecturer ratio.
- In data collected in 2015-2016 by the Commission, close to 6000 enroll in the Universities annually for PhDs, but only 369 graduated which 6.2%.
- Additionally, CUE studies have shown that over 50% of those who enroll for PhD and 20% of those enrolled at Masters levels at Kenyan Universities (public) drop out.
- The vision 2030 envisages a situation, where Kenya becomes a knowledge based economy by 2030.
- You cannot grow PhDs without Masters and Bachelors (STEM); to Grow Bachelors you need PhDs;
- Demand for PhD holders on the rise in the academic, Government, NGO, UN and Business sectors;
- How do we increase the numbers and graduations of masters and PhDs in our university system?
6. **Academic staff matters**

- University academic staff numbers have not kept pace with rapidly expanding student numbers;
- Lack of funding for Research and outreach has meant that Universities are mostly doing teaching;
- Mostly ignoring research, outreach and mentorship of post graduate students; Post doctoral…
- Because of the shortage of university academic staff, universities have resorted to using part time lecturers.
- Especially in Satellite campuses (internal and external);
- These staff lacks the necessary training, commitment and professional orientation to carry out their duties.
- Part timers are poorly recruited (with no letters of appointment), poorly monitored and poorly remunerated leading to a dire situation for the country.

1. **How do we improve the situation of academic staff?**
2. **How do we increase research and outreach activities??**
7. Linkages with TVET and Industry

- TVET Institutions play crucial roles in producing practical manpower for the Economy;
- Under the KQF, TVET Institutions should feed into the University system;
- But, allot of TVET institutions have been turned into Universities;
- Universities duplicating the work of TVET institutions and TVET institutions attempting to do what universities do;
- Lack of harmony and coherence;
- Universities using scarce resources to do what TVET sector could do; and in the process suffocating the sector;
- Kenyans value Degrees!!!
- How can we create harmony in the higher education sector for sustainable development of the country??
8. Internationalization

- Kenya and the region has shown interest in attracting international students to our higher education Institutions.
- Recent surveys indicate that use of different education systems has hindered free movement of students within the EA region;
- In Kenya most of the foreign students are to be found in private universities and are mostly from S. Sudan, Rwanda and Somalia;
- Our institutions have not put in place structures and systems to attract, sustain and support international students; predictable academic calendars, attractive accommodation, offices to cater for international students etc
- How do we promote internationalization of higher education in East Africa???
Outcomes

- Improved enrolment in STEM;
- Sustainable Finance;
- Good Governance and leadership;
- Increased number of publications in peer reviewed and accredited journals;
- Improved Masters/PhD Enrolment;
- Improved Masters/PhD completion rates;
- Reduced number of part time lecturers;
- Improved management of part time staff.

Impacts

- Better Quality University Education;
- Relevant University Education; and
- Higher Quality of Graduates.
Thanks for Listening

“Yes I will get there”