

Strengthening Leadership and Management Capacity of Mid-Career University Managers and Administrators to facilitate Africa's transformation Agenda

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The African people and institutions reaffirm the need to create integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena (see Agenda 2063; Aspiration 1). The institutions have committed to building a society of well-educated citizens and igniting a skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge based society. To achieve these aspirations, institutions of higher learning and research for development play a great role. Universities remain central to achieving the targets given their triple role of training the required skilled labor force, knowledge generation through research and innovations, and knowledge dissemination through outreach. The universities, therefore, need to strategically position themselves and anchor their core mandates to achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063. This repositioning of university mandates requires well adaptive university leadership whose management capacities and organizing abilities are agile to facilitate rapid yet realistic, focused and strategic interventions within the university systems and national institutions to undertake meaningful transformations within their institutions to achieve the espoused aspirations in Africa.

However, many African universities remain with internal and external leadership and management challenges that hinder their performance which need to be overcome to allow them effectively execute their role in economic transformation of the African continent. Some of these challenges include inadequate funding, particularly for research, increasing demand for higher education, with little parallel increase in infrastructure or human resources, limited autonomy and academic freedom and limited leadership training and systematic entry into leadership. Universities thus remain encumbered by weaknesses and inefficiencies often caused by 1) limited foresight and lack of strategic planning for effective execution of the stipulated roles of different university units; 2) poor management of existing human resources including attracting and retaining high quality faculty; 3) low quality and relevance of research; 4) limited capacity for resource mobilization and financial management; 5) limited capacity to harmonize the republic of scholars and the university as a stakeholder organization; 6) poor external relations and partnership management, and 7) intermittent strikes from both academics and students. These result in weak universities, unable to deliver the type of products required to contribute meaningfully to national and regional development and often leading to limited appreciation from policy makers on the effectiveness of investing in Higher Education in Africa as there are barely any meaningful returns on investment to fathom about. Targeted capacity building for university managers is therefore required to enhance leadership and management competencies to steer universities to meaningfully contribute to university transformation and economic transformation of the Africa. Effective university leadership can significantly unlock the full potential of universities in training of proactive and skilled human resources, generation of relevant innovations and technologies and dissemination of such technologies to the wider public as well as effective engagement with the private sector in the transformation agenda.

Purpose of the Side Event

Strengthening leadership capacity of the mid-career leaders and university managers is purposed to facilitate internal and regional capacities of managers to undertake relevant and effective transformations in African universities. It is further hoped that this capacity building initiative will



Objectives of the training

enhance “Thought leadership ” capacity in African Universities, to enable their growth to become powerhouses of proactive graduates, innovations and research which can transform the continent to a knowledge based economy driven by science, technology and innovations.

The overarching objective of this training initiative is to strategically respond to the call for transformation by designing and delivering learning opportunities aimed at enabling university managers to:

1. use their skills as thought leaders beyond disciplinary expertise to engage public policy with government, business and communities proactively;
2. lead complex partnerships within and between major scientific disciplinary networks;
3. lead innovations in research, teaching and public engagement within and between universities and other institutions;
4. become centers driving Africa’s innovations and transformation agenda.

Approach and Methodology

The training initiative for mid-career university managers and administrators is designed around effective, participatory and self-reflection learning approach. Accordingly a cohort approach will be implemented for two groups of 30 participants each. Each group would go through two rounds of training. A team of facilitators from hfp Consulting in the United Kingdom have been contracted to facilitate the training sessions, with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Venue and Participants

The Leadership training will be held at the BICC in Lilongwe, Malawi. This training is designed for mid-career managers and administrators at the university that typically include the Deputy Vice Chancellors and Directors of RUFORUM Universities. Forty four university representatives, one per university, will participate in the training including four RUFORUM Secretariat staff. A follow up Reflection Workshop for Vice Chancellors is planned for the first half of 2018, and would involve similar number of representation 29 October to 01 November 2017

Date for the Leadership Training

Side Event Organizers and Contact

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Annex 1: Detailed Programme will be Provided by the Trainers

