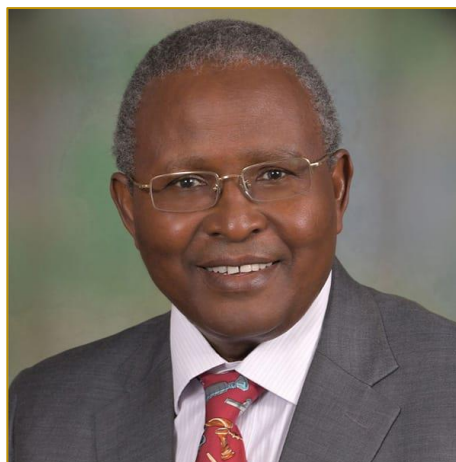




## Developing university competitiveness through human capital development, collaborations and entrepreneurship



Universities, private and public, are responsible for teaching, research, publishing, consultancy services and advancing human development. Over the years, funding of public universities through the Exchequer has been the Government's prerogative, and was possible when the demand for university education was low. However, the increase in demand for university education has led to establishment of more universities, with governments of many African countries struggling to fund them. Limited funding has led to financial constraints that have affected their operations and growth. This begs the question, what is the future of funding for universities? With the increase in the number of universities, competition is rife, and universities need to up their game through a paradigm shift from teaching only to become more developmental and entrepreneurial.



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For a university to do well, it needs to have a productive human capital comprising of academic, administrative, technical, and support staff. This begins by selecting the right people regarding skills, competencies, knowledge and attitudes. Proper selection of employees will reduce training costs and time taken in their supervision. As universities, we need to support employees' individual goals that are in tandem with the goals of the universities. Fostering a culture of inclusivity, collaboration, and career advancement will enable our staff to effectively deliver on their responsibilities.

As the cash crunch continues to bite, universities are embracing enterprising ways to attract more students. At Egerton University, we are focusing more on programmes that





are currently in demand in the labour market. We are also encouraging and building our student's entrepreneurial capacity through various incubation hubs such as the Agrienterprise Incubation for Improved Livelihoods and Economic Development (AGLEAD), Ajira Centre and the Centre of Excellence in Livestock Innovation and Business (CoELIB).

The University also hosts the "Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa's Growth and Development" (TAGDEV) Program. Students supported through TAGDev are from fourteen (14) African countries, and many have impacted rural communities in various ways, including setting up bursary fund (Senegal), the establishment of viable enterprises that have employed over 100 youths (Kenya & Ghana) and extension support for farmers (Kenya, Malawi). At the institutional level, TAGDev has contributed to staff re-tooling, improved governance through institutional policy support and facilitation of national policy dialogue on agricultural higher education transformation.

The World Bank African Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Agriculture and Agribusiness Management (CESAAM) at Egerton University is part of 24 Centres of Excellence supported by the World Bank to establish regional hubs of excellence in FIVE priority areas: industry, health, agriculture, applied statistics and agriculture. The overall interest of ACE-II is to provide institutional capacity for quality postgraduate training and to forge partnerships among other activities. CESAAM is strategically placed to meet these objectives through its robust programs with an extensive support system and partners. CESAAM now supports 240 postgraduate students in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management, Animal Sciences Department, Department of Food Science, Department of Crops, Horticulture and Soils, Department of Agricultural Extension and Department of Agricultural Engineering. The Centre now hosts students from the whole region, with 23% being regional and 52% female.

Further, the university is in the process of revamping the income generating activities to diversify our revenue streams. We are actively seeking additional collaborations with institutions of higher learning all over the world to increase opportunities for scholarships and grants to our students and researchers, respectively. We are also seeking more partnerships in research and consultancies with various counties. All these are concerted efforts that reduce our dependency on capitation and fees.

### **About the Author**





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