IV.2

KNOWLEDGE, ENGAGEMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA*

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* This chapter is devoted to Sub-Saharan Africa following the UNESCO regional classification.

Africa's wide diversity of culture, language, socioeconomic conditions, climate, politics and history is reflected in the diversity found in its multiple community–university engagement (CUE) approaches. African scholarship has an ancient and diverse multi-ethnic base that has been impacted by the historical forces of slavery and colonialism. Recent shifts from regarding communities as 'beneficiaries' to a view of 'equal collaborative partnership' between communities and universities are beginning to gain momentum and to yield mutually beneficial outcomes. A constructivist framework describing 'scholarly', 'benevolent', 'democratic' and 'professional' discourses is used to describe and illustrate CUE approaches in Africa. Examples are given of national policies and legislative CUE frameworks, and challenges to implementation are discussed. These require 'boundary-spanners' who understand cross-cultural dynamics and have the ability to co-create hybrid cultural spaces where people can collaborate to develop shared visions. The scholarship of CUE brings into focus questions of belonging and identity, which in Africa can manifest as a bricolage of traditional and modern elements of culture. CUE in Africa suggests directions for the transformation of higher education as a social responsibility to citizens and societies both locally and globally. CUE is, however, under-theorized, and more research is required to understand, learn and teach how to mediate the complex relationships that CUE requires.

INTRODUCTION

Africa is a vast continent with a great diversity in terms of culture, religion, socioeconomic conditions, language, climate, politics and history. In this paper, we have contextualized CUE in Africa within a history of oppressive power relations that continues to influence debates and scholarship across much of the continent. We have traced the discourses influencing CUE and discussed competing understandings, national policies and practices, and implementation structures, and highlighted contemporary trends and concerns, as reflected in available CUE literature within selected African universities.

HISTORICAL BACKDROP

Given the vast size of continental Africa, perhaps one of the most distinctive features of African scholarship is its diverse roots, coming from indigenous African, Islamic and European-Christian origins, each with unique ways of understanding the world and engagement with community. One of the world's oldest centres of scholarship, dating from 3300 BC onwards, existed in Egypt, where the Alexandria Museum and Library (3rd century BC) became the largest centre of learning in the ancient world. By the 10th century, the al-Karaouine mosque in Morocco and the Al-Azhar mosque in Egypt had been founded. These are considered to be the oldest continuously run universities in the world. During the 15th century, Sankore was part of an active centre of scholarship, with thousands of students and numerous private libraries situated in Timbuktu (Mali). Today, these institutions of Islamic scholarship in Africa remain deeply influential. However, Cleaveland (2008) points out that:

> scholars did not acquire their skills in universities … they acquired their knowledge through informal institutions that may have been in many ways distinctively West African, but were also clearly multi-ethnic and multiracial.

The indigenous education system was fully integrated with and served the communities' ways of life (Marah, 2006), and continues in many ways across much of Africa. Mbiti (1990) explains the Ubuntu principle, in which personhood and identity are considered to be totally embedded in the collective existence – 'the individual can only say: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am."'

The development and furtherance of a scholarship rooted in African values, with its unique cosmovision describing a holistic and anthropocentric ontology, was truncated by major, disruptive historical forces in the form of slavery and colonial domination, which reached their apex during the 19th century. Although slave trading in Africa has been documented from 3000 BC onwards, by the 19th century up to 50 million people had been forcibly removed from their homes and traded to external sources across the Atlantic and Indian oceans. Colonialism brought with it the legacy of European-style universities where structure and mandate were rooted in the residential model. Together with Judaeo-Christian beliefs of control over nature, individuality and autonomy (Nobles, 1991), Cartesian duality and Newtonian linear causality were major influences on the development of modernist thinking. It was a worldview from which to observe the physical world as separate from the human mind and its capacity for formulating thoughts. Science was believed to be objective, universal and rational, and as being able to bring order, security and social understanding through intellectual pursuit. The belief that Europe was the most enlightened and civilized part of the world was used to justify the subordination of other parts of the world through colonization.

In sub-Saharan Africa, early elementary education, originally introduced by slave traders, was taken over by missionaries and gradually augmented by the activities of the ruling colonial governments (Sicherman, 2005). One of the earliest universities in Africa was Fourah Bay College, founded in 1826 in Sierra Leone (Preece et al., 2012). From the 1920s, several other universities, notably Makerere in Uganda (1922) and Fort Hare in South Africa (1916), were established following the commissioning of the British Advisory Committee on Education in the colonies. In the British tradition of community outreach, an extra-mural unit was established at Makerere in 1953 and at the University of Cape Town in the 1940s. However, universities were established mainly to promote colonial ideology, to weaken the authority of local chiefs, to reduce students' exposure to liberal ideas from universities in other parts of the world and to train local staff to assist in colonial administration (Akin Aina, 1994; Sicherman, 2005).

Towards the early 1940s, several institutions were created that promoted and implemented policies to develop the British colonies as 'future equal partners' rather than as colonial subjects. Alongside the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, the Colonial Research Fund included the appointment of the Asquith and Elliot Commissions in the British East African and West African regions to guide policy for the development of higher education in the colonies. Their recommendations have had a lasting influence on the development of higher education (Basu, 2012). In 1945, the Asquith Commission emphasized the importance of universities in preparing educated leaders for self government and promoted the need of 'a strong, fully staffed Department of Extra-Mural Studies [that would] have a vital contribution to make to the development of the community as a whole' (Saunders, 1961).

By the late 1950s and 1960s, several African countries had gained independence. Their presidents made strong pleas for the recognition of African scholarship and an orientation towards community needs in line with indigenous African beliefs and values. In 1961, Nkrumah inaugurated the University of Ghana with a speech drawing on the history of education in Africa (Cleaveland, 2008). The message was echoed in 1963 by Nyerere, who made a plea to African universities to shake off their elitist colonial mentality and contribute to society:

> let us be quite clear; the University … has a very definite role to play in development in this area, and to do this effectively it must be in, and of, the community … The University of East Africa … must direct its energies particularly towards the needs of East Africa … it's in this manner that the university will contribute to our development … In this fight the university must take an active part, outside as well as inside the walls. (Nyerere,1963, cited in Mwaikokesya, 2012)

This shift in orientation was reinforced in 1962 during the UNESCO conference at Tananarive on the development of higher education for social and economic transformation and by the founding of the Association of African Universities (AAU) in 1967 to promote the Africanization of African universities through ownership of the curriculum and management, and by serving national and regional development needs through CUE (Preece et al., 2012).

Despite the rise of postmodernism in other parts of the world, the European colonial influence left a lasting impression on African universities (Ajayi et al., 1996) through the positivist orientation of knowledge production that had been incorporated into African universities during the 1950s. This resulted in universities aiming to produce subject/discipline-specific, professional specialists, while subjects such as sociology and psychology were imbued with quantitative methods in order to be 'more scientific'. This orientation was

hostile to certain African knowledge systems and traditions and was characterized by:

> Separation and alienation from the rural majority, particularly in the Anglophone countries, reflecting the ivory tower nature of the colonial institutions …, research that was not related to the needs of the majority and limited access to higher education since the universities were geared towards serving the elite. (Ng'ethe et al., 2003)

At the same time, while the nationalist movements were overtly anti-colonial, the universities 'emulated the goals of their colonial masters in producing an elite population for the bureaucracy and private sector' (Zeleza, 2004).

By the 1970s, African governments were struggling to meet the challenges of matching pre-liberation ideals to post-independence realities in the face of harsh economic conditions, unfulfilled expectations from their constituents and growing inequality between the ruling elites and the masses. While there were inspiring efforts to promote popular participation by President Nyerere in Tanzania in his campaign to imbed 'education for self-reliance', Tanzania was by the early 1980s in the midst of a severe economic crisis, and President Nyerere admitted that the policy had failed to be fully realized.

The neoliberal model of development, promoted by global financial institutions such the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary fund, had a severely crippling effect on African universities and education in general, not least with respect to community engagement and lifelong learning. Tensions mounted as some nationalist governments grew increasingly intolerant of the criticism that often emanated from staff and students at the universities. Governments responded by restricting their autonomy through exercising increased control over university appointments and funding. In the 1980s, the WB tended to disinvest from universities in favour of primary and vocational education, which led to a rapid decline in capacity across African universities, and impacted the development of Africa-centric knowledge systems, research strategies and the capacity to address local problems with local solutions (Brock-Utne, 2003; Teferra and Greijn, 2010) and community outreach. Externally imposed fiscal policies encouraged:

> an increase in user fees at the universities … and the reduction of funding support for books, food and tuition fees – making universities … become places

of learning only for the children of the well-to-do. (Modise and Mosweunyane, 2012)

While the WB has since reversed its policy towards universities, it remains directed within a narrow neoliberal orientation driven by competitive market forces. An important measure of quality in universities is the publishing of research papers in leading, peer-reviewed journals. As quantitative research studies are deemed to be more scientific and therefore more trustworthy and legitimate (Grant et al., 1987), they have a greater impact on policy and public opinion. This underlying bias towards positivist-oriented quantitative research, together with the 'free-market' approach, severely hampered the development of African scholarship uncoupled from Western perspectives. As Nobles (1976) argued:

> As long as Black researchers ask the same questions and theorise the same theory as their White counterparts, Black researchers will continue to be part and parcel of a system which perpetuates the misunderstanding of Black reality, and consequently contributes to our degradation.

It is also important to note that, in the mid-1970s to early 1980s, a group of adult education researchers such as Kemal Mustapha, Linzi Manicom, Yousuf Kassam, Marja-Liisa Swabtz, Marjorier Mbilinyi and others introduced an alternative community-based research methodology called 'participatory research' that was partially theorized. This process culminated into the formation of the Participatory Research Network based in Tanzania and an African Regional Workshop on Participatory Research held in Mzumbe, Tanzania in 1979 (Kassam and Mustafa, 1982). This participatory research approach introduced very well the idea of involving local communities in research projects that concerned them, and its principles are in consonance with CUE philosophy.

More recently, the Implementing the Third Mission of Universities in Africa initiative, a Pan African Action Research study funded by the African Union (2010–2011), explored how the Millenium Development Goals, specifically with respect to poverty reduction, were being addressed through CUE (Preece et al., 2012). The shift:

> was brought about by the realisation that just as knowledge, technology and skills reside in universities, so public and private sectors also command knowledge bases from which the university can

learn and leverage its entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities. (Openjuru and Ikoja-Odongo, 2012)

In summary, the tension inherent in producing African scholarship located within indigenous African philosophies and those which are driven externally persists and remains a central conundrum with which African scholars continue to grapple. The impacts of the socioeconomic and political contexts at different periods in the history of the different countries and regions of Africa have shaped different and often competing approaches to CUE.

DIVERSITY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS OF CUE

In Africa, CUE varies widely in its terminology, application and outcomes, and stage of development. O'Brien (2012) developed a constructivist framework (Charmaz, 2006) employing four CUE discourses, namely 'scholarship', 'benevolence', 'democracy' and 'professionalism', which describe a series of power relations and development processes inherent in CUE. Its simplicity allows it to be broadly applied as a descriptive tool for CUE approaches in Africa. These are briefly summarized below, followed by illustrative examples.

The 'scholarly' discourse is oriented towards research and theoretical development at the individual as well as at the institutional level. Academics and students remain dominant with respect to the roles of participating communities, with knowledge diffusing from the central core of a discipline, but also emanating from communities. Student reflection about the learning process is key, while engagement between the university and other partners involves the patronage of highly regarded academics to increase legitimacy. 'Scholarly' CUE recognizes the interdisciplinarity of knowledge, but is presented within the confines prescribed by the dominant discourse 'separated from the engagement and service' (Grossman, 2009) where it is incorporated into academic programmes and published in journals rather than as community projects, services or physical structures. Thus, students' learning through reflection is regarded as the key focus of the CUE, compared with practical off-campus work and the provision of services.

The 'benevolent' discourse intends to foster a sense of social responsibility or 'good citizenship' within the student to benefit others. Engagement typically consists of consultations, needs surveys, planning, service provision and evaluation by outsiders who have come to help the beneficiaries (O'Brien, 2012). Typically, the lead role-player is a government department or not-for-profit organization (NPO), assisted by the university; together, they provide the community with a physical product, facility or service. The development of students' skills in planning, performance of services and reporting to the universities' funders is emphasized. Communities are judged on whether they can achieve their goals independently from the service providers. Power relations are highly skewed but not transparent, as service providers determine the service to be provided to beneficiaries in need, thus 'both students and communities perceive the provision of services to be a means of empowerment … [yet] services are delivered in environments of scarcity' (O'Brien, 2012).

The 'democratic' discourse is explicitly concerned with power relations, social justice and diversity, with the focus on '[affirming] commonality and unity, while … [validating] diversity and individuality among human beings' (Goduka, 1999):

The discourse defines engagement as dialogue, with the emphasis on understanding the other's life space rather than necessarily converting that space to mirror one's own. Engagement is characterised by mutuality and the flattening of the hierarchies prominent in the previous two discourses. (O'Brien, 2012)

Rather than being defined by what is lacking in their lives, participating communities are defined by their roles or place of residence. Stakeholders recognize each other as equal partners in knowledge creation and development for interdependence and cohesion between them. The co-creation of multilayered knowledge is emphasized, as are personal skills such as sensitivity to power inequalities, mutual accountability and the use of participatory methods. Power-brokering is the direct focus of the curriculum as the different parties work together towards eliciting social change.

The 'professional' discourse perceives engagement as a transaction that serves to 'facilitate the development of … future leaders who are not only knowledgeable and competent, but also socially conscious and ethical professionals' (O'Brien, 2010). Engagement between communities, service providers and representatives from universities interacts formally through the use of logical frameworks, contracts, timetables and budgets. Professionalism is displayed as a preoccupation with human and organizational development; marketplace language dominates, with the service provider holding the dominant role. 'Community

members are regarded as clients, learners, patients or users of the professional service rendered by students under the supervision of the service provider', while 'Higher education staff highlight their roles as administrators, monitors, accreditors and managers in the service learning process' (O'Brien, 2012).

The application of knowledge, with both specialized practical skills and experiential knowledge, is prioritized in the university curricula. Power is held by those with the resources to undertake service-learning and by external professional bodies who give accreditation for professional practice. Community members, although they may benefit materially, are merely a means to an end, and hence agreements for service-learning 'can often fail or be sabotaged due to insufficient attention being given to skewed power relations' (O'Brien, 2012). O'Brien (2012) recommends that, despite inherent flexibility in the application and implementation of CUE, curricula need to be coherent in terms of the goals and (un)articulated philosophies behind the modules, as well as to avoid unnecessary confusion for students, staff and communities regarding practical realities.

Below, we use this framework as a lens to briefly examine power relations as well as application, implementation and challenges according to the prevalent discourse. Four examples of CUE from different African countries are provided in contexts that have emerged from authoritarianism, war or other forms of oppression and trauma. The relations of power are complex with regards to race, gender, ethnicity and class and have a direct bearing on the dominant CUE discourse employed.

Example 1 is the National University of Rwanda, which, despite the loss of staff, students and resources during the 1994 genocide, reopened the following year. Its mission statement now includes community service, termed 'outreach'. The Centre for Conflict Management (CCM) and the Centre for Mental Health (CUNISAM) were specifically created in response to the genocide. The CCM generates local knowledge about the deep causes of conflict, and aims to develop policies and potential strategies for the development of durable peace. The CUNISAM clinic, run by the Department of Clinical Psychology, provides free outpatient treatment in a country where many still struggle with the aftermath of genocide-related trauma disorders. CUE programmes for 'genocide ideology prevention' include 'Community Dialogue for Peace' and 'Rwandan Reconciliation and Democratic Citizenship', while the 'Civic and Peace Education' module is compulsory for all first-year students. In addition, a free legal advice clinic for local people is run by staff and students at the Faculty of Law to provide ongoing legal support for persons affected by the events of 1994, as well as for other matters. The CUE programme encompasses aspects of all four discourses, but due to its goal to address specific and immediate national needs and the transitional state of the nation, the CUE programme is more aligned with the 'scholarly', 'benevolent' and 'professional' discourses (National University of Rwanda, 2013).

Example 2 comes from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in South Africa, respected for its long-standing and varied approaches to CUE with its roots as a 'struggle university' during the period of opposition to the apartheid government. Its School of Public Health (SOPH) has built a reputation over 20 years of being a leader in African public health education. It has provided access for more than 700 health professionals, some to Master's level, from more than 20 African countries (Alexander et al., 2009). Its aims include the provision of community-based field training that fosters community partnership, and to empower communities to participate in debates around ethical issues (University of the Western Cape, 1992). The SOPH collaborates widely with international and local parties. Its CUE discourse employs aspects of both 'democratic' (in its interaction with communities) and 'professional' (in its delivery) discourses. However, the SOPH is facing challenges in delivery, capacity and funding, as well as organizational challenges associated with the delivery of a distance learning programme in a university originally structured around contact and residential training (Commonwealth of Learning, 1994).

Example 3 concerns a recent CUE initiative in Mozambique that involved a quadruplicate agreement between women from the local farming communities, an international NPO, an international research organization (IRO) and the Eduardo Mondlane University. The project aimed to empower poor women by linking the research capacity of the IRO with the field operations of the NPO, whose staff had been trained by the university. Although a forum was established at the start of the project to bring all parties to the same table, local government structures were isolated almost from the outset. After two years, it was found that the project had been taken over by the more powerful men and a few wealthier women, while most of the poor women had 'disappeared'. When the project was assessed by external consultants, the IRO research manager observed that 'Participant communities have experienced research fatigue due to prolonged exposure from visits by different researchers' (van Oosterhout and

Chitsike, 2012). Yet, after a participatory field exercise with the consultants, a farmer from one of the participant communities commented:

> We would like to continue having these exercises. We learned (through this participatory work) that we can improve by exchanging experiences. The project should give us a hand, and we are stronger together. In this way we can improve our lives. (van Oosterhout and Chitsike, 2012)

This example, originally employing the 'scholarly' discourse, illustrates the benefits of more equal power-brokering between scientists and communities through the 'democratic' discourse. Yet implementation structures are often problematic in that research contracts state specific outputs at specified dates that need to be adhered to in order to attract funding, while programmatic engagement between communities, university bodies and other partners advances and regresses during its evolution.

In example 4, Favish and McMillan (2009) describe the processes that were put in place in 2006 when the Senate of the University of Cape Town approved a definition of social responsiveness that included 'an intentional public purpose or benefit'. They demonstrate how a range of 'socially responsive' practices feed back into the university's mainstream teaching and research, thus dispelling the myth that socially responsive CUE is a discrete activity, marginal to the core functions and activities of the institution. Rather, it involves feedback loops that embed CUE within teaching and research itself. Similar participatory approaches are embedded at the Centre for Applied Social Sciences and the Agriculture Faculty of the University of Zimbabwe. These examples deal with the epistemology of participation (Umpleby et al., 2004) and the depiction of the resultant changes in social systems (Auerswald, 1990), thereby demonstrating an integrated approach to CUE that stretches O'Brien's four discourses to the second- and third-order levels.

O'Brien's framework is different but complementary to Budd Hall's (personal communication, 1 January 2013) four principles of expression of CUE, which cover a student engagement focus, a community-based research focus, an academic staff policy focus and a 'knowledge mobilization' or 'knowledge translation' focus. O'Brien's framework focuses on the broader purpose or orientation of the intervention as distinct from the focus on a specific target group.

In addition to the examples above, there are within the universities a range of partnerships with government departments, industry and commerce, and civil society, in the pursuance of, for example, continuing professional development, entrepreneurial innovations, public education or social services. These are related to CUE but are not usually described within a CUE discursive framework. For example, at Makerere University, there are two structures: the Makerere University Private Sector Forum (MUPSF) set up in response to the Africa-wide Smart Partnership Dialogue to bring together the public sector, the private sector and the academy to work together on issues of mutual concern; and the:

> 'Triple Helix Intervention [which] brings together actors from Government, Academia and the private sector to find innovative solutions to problems faced by business in order to improve performance and profitability and make business more competitive locally and globally. (Openjuru and Ikoja-Odongo, 2012)

NATIONAL POLICIES AND LEGISLATIVE CUE FRAMEWORKS

CUE is reflected as the 'third mission' in the policies and vision and mission statements of most African universities. Policy recommendations in CUE literature have emphasized that institutional commitment to CUE should start at the strategic planning level in order for institutions to draw on a minimal baseline for institutional support (Preece, 2011).

The national policies for higher education encourage universities to engage in community service that can address socioeconomic problems. However, there are a limited number of specific community engagement policies in Africa at the national level. The easily visible exception is South Africa, where we were able to locate a more elaborate national level policy commitment, which has in turn directly influenced the formation of academic bodies such as the South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF), founded in 2009 (Botman, 2010), and Community–Higher Education Service Partnerships, launched in 1999, supported by the Ford Foundation, in response to the call of the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education of 1997 (Lazarus et al., 2008). The White Paper laid the foundations for making community engagement an integral part of higher education, with one of its goals being to promote and develop social responsibility and awareness among students through community service programmes to enhance equity and democracy. The National Plan

for Higher Education viewed it as a prerequisite, with the Higher Education Quality Committee requiring specific reporting on community engagement in institutional audits. Community engagement is the umbrella term, with community service-learning as just one part of this. This policy notes that it is the universities' responsibility to make a meaningful contribution to the development of the communities within their reach, and recommends that this should be achieved through the integration of teaching, learning and research in terms of internship, clinical practice, work-based education in community settings and other community-based forms of professional training (Department of Education, 1997).

In Uganda, the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001, amended 2006, holds universities responsible for finding solutions to social and economic problems in the community (Government of Uganda, 2001). In other regions of sub-Saharan Africa, there are only passing policy references to community engagement, with 'service' being one of the three pillars of university education.

At the institutional level, there are a number of internal institutional impacts of CUE on research and education. For example, the mission statement of Makerere University (2007) includes the goal: 'To enhance the capacity of the university to link with and service community, private and public sectors and other universities'. The University of Malawi's strategic plan specifies 'outreach/services'. In Nigeria, both the national policy and university strategic plan identify 'community service', and in Lesotho the universities' vision and strategic plans highlight 'community service' and 'engaging in partnerships', respectively. At the University of Botswana, community service is one of the criteria for promotion of staff, and in Rwanda the Universities' mission statement refers to 'outreach' (Preece, 2011). The University of Limpopo's mission is 'A world-class African university which responds to education, research and community development needs through partnerships and knowledge generation.'

At Makerere University, it is mandatory for all programmes to include field attachment or service-learning as part of the credit. No degree programme can be designed or reviewed and approved without evidence of involving the external stakeholders in the process. There are institutional structures that have been created within universities that are specifically meant for CUE; for example, the MUPSF was created for linking with industry, complete with the appointment of non-academic honorary professors based in the community to promote CUE.

Across the board, there has, however, been persistent dissatisfaction with outcomes. Universities are at varying stages of conceptualizing community engagement practice, with some relying on volunteerism; there are few university senate committees responsible for community engagement; there is minimal government funding for it, with most innovations being driven with support from external donors, services to clients, or relationships with universities located in the north; or it is being equated to community service-learning and is then funded through normal teaching allocations. In summary, it appears that CUE is valued at a rhetorical level as it is referenced in national or university policies, but its translation into practice is often not supported institutionally through high-level senate committees or through dedicated budget allocations. There are, in some instances, offices for CUE, but many CUE initiatives are marginal to the central enterprise of the universities, or they are *ad hoc* or assumed to be integral parts of teaching and research and lack the necessary feedback loops to embed them into central activities.

Continental level networks have reinforced national- and institutional-level policy provision. For example, Africa's New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) calls for universities and 'higher education institutions in Africa to implement curricula that produce a new generation of all-round graduates with blended entrepreneurial, vocational and intellectual competences to act as nuclei for change'. NEPAD also advocates that universities in Africa have a social obligation for knowledge generation and transfer (Makerere University, 2007, p. 7). In addition to NEPAD, the Pan-African University network, which is the AAU mission, is, 'to raise the quality of higher education in Africa and strengthen its contribution to African development'. Botman (2010) further states that the AAU acknowledges that development is linked to higher education and lists community engagement as a core function of universities, alongside teaching, learning and research.

THEMES

DEBATING KNOWLEDGE
As we have highlighted above, the question of what and whose knowledge counts runs like a fault line through discussions of CUE. Although global and long-standing debates about different forms of knowledge infuse debates about CUE in Africa as elsewhere, the cry for a recognition of indigenous knowledge and the

asserton of African identity in its multiple and diverse expressions (Appiah, 1992) penetrate the debates.

A recent study by Walters et al. (2012) on promoting lifelong learning in selected African countries recognizes the importance of linking strategies for 'learning communities' with indigenous African knowledge, traditions and practices of community-based learning:

> building a learning society family by family, community by community, district by district through tapping into the long existing traditions of community learning and converting national policy guidelines into sustainable action at local levels. (Walters et al., 2012)

Enabling policies, funding, planning, expertise on the ground and relationship-building are needed to sustain such operations. Running through these are questions of identity, of 'who's knowledge' and of how the diversity of African cultural heritage can be expressed in an increasingly globalized world. The role of universities, together with government and civil society, is integral to building a 'learning society' that plays the tension between the 'modern' and the 'traditional.'

By embracing the idea of knowledge co-creation with the local communities and recognizing that knowledge also resides outside universities (Openjuru and Ikoja-Odongo, 2012), African universities are providing avenues for the acceptance of indigenous knowledge systems through this new CUE thinking.

CAPABILITIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CUE IN AFRICA

McMillan (2009) highlights the complexity of human relationships in collaboration, in particular the 'boundary work' that engagement with communities requires. This echoes Edwards's (2007) conception of 'relational agency' and the need for expertise and capacities from 'boundary spanners' (Williams, 2010); these people demonstrate strong communication skills with ongoing tolerance and a willingness to understand the cross-cultural dynamics of interactions, as well as a willingness to 'co-create hybrid cultural spaces' (Fryer, 2010) where people can collaborate to develop shared visions (Preece et al., 2012).

To counter the 'othering' of colonialism, both universities and communities need to come out of their comfort zone into 'zones of crossings', to meet on 'a bridge called home', so that new relationships can be forged that demand the fostering of creative and alternative ways of learning for a cultural (re)construction of identity and belonging (Walters, 2009).

In the range of African approaches to CUE, there are the beginnings of acknowledgement of the capabilities, skills and attitudes required to effectively negotiate and mediate the complex relationships that CUE requires, but this needs to go much deeper. There is a need for more research to assist the understanding of what these capabilities are and how they are taught and learnt.

There is also a need to create continental wide structures that can advance and support CUE in Africa. This could starts with, as Preece et al. (2012) suggest, a strengthening of the existing relationship that exists with global collaborative frameworks such as the Pascal International Observatory, which has promoted the CUE agenda globally through Pascal Universities for a Modern Renaissance. There are also national bodies such as SAHECEF, which will need to be encouraged in other African countries and from that to build regional frameworks. In universities, there is still a strong need to mainstream CUE activities in research and teaching and in the administration of universities.

SOCIAL PURPOSES

As we have signalled, there are layers of confusion and complexity in understanding what is meant by CUE – both what is meant by 'community' and what is meant by 'engagement'. At different times in Africa's history, higher education's particular social purposes have been described in multiple, contextually specific ways. In South Africa in the 1970s and 80s, for example, the UWC defined its mission and purpose in relation to the anti-apartheid struggle and attainment of social justice for the majority black population; in the late 1990s, this was redefined in terms of lifelong learning for democratic citizenship and engagement with society to enhance possibilities for redress and equity. In 2010, it strove to be an 'engaged university' within the 'global knowledge economy'. The rich case study of Makerere University in Uganda, as described by Mamdani (2008), conveys a similar movement over time, with 'community' and 'engagement' being variously interpreted in different historical periods.

Another example is CUE in the interests of building a 'knowledge economy.' In partnership with Gaborone City Council, the University of Botswana is developing a 'learning city' (Molebatsi, 2012; Ntseane, 2012), a concept that is still unknown to most universities and it is not yet the defining language for explaining their CUE (Mwaikokesya, 2012). However, 'knowledge transfer partnerships and networks' initiatives that bring together regional stakeholders, local business and community groups do exist at very rudimentary levels (Openjuru and Ikoja-Odongo, 2012). These examples

illustrate that 'community' and 'social purpose' can vary greatly. As the UNESCO Declaration on Higher Education (1988) states, CUE must aim at 'Eliminating poverty, intolerance, violence, illiteracy, hunger, environmental degradation and disease'.

In the context of Africa, socioeconomic development is all important. However, which development paradigm predominates is equally important – is it within a positivist neoliberal ethic of intense, possessive individualism, or is it one that values social and environmental relationships that are marked by solidarity and a commitment to collective empowerment and the sustainability of the planet? The dominant development paradigms will invariably be reflected within approaches to CUE.

TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

African universities are increasingly seeking to have a place on the international stage (Teferra and Greijn, 2010) in a globalizing world. Preece et al. (2012) show the legacy of international influences on the curriculum and the locus of training for many African academics – along with ongoing state control where the State's development plans are themselves controlled by external funding agendas – which impinge on the 'African vision.' The Africanization of universities remains only a partially fulfilled aspiration, with very little evidence of its influence on the global stage (Teferra and Greijn, 2010).

The scholarship of CUE concerns the association between community engagement and the construction of knowledge in universities (O'Brien, 2012) but is under-theorized in Africa. The specifics of 'African learning communities in a modern sense', where smartphones and internet-based learning are the norm for increasingly urban populations, is not well known. Mobile technology is almost universal across the continent, with its use being demonstrated dramatically in the 'Arab Spring'. In addition, due to increased financial pressure, the extended family and communities operate differently from how they did a generation ago, so that the notion of 'communal' vs. 'individualist' consciousness is changing and reflects the tension between the 'modern' and the 'traditional', the 'rural' and the 'urban'. Appiah's postmodern vision of the non-existence of one single truth has been conducive to a vision of African identity as a bricolage of traditional and modern elements of culture (Muller, 2005).

There are initiatives at the local level that are grappling with these inherent tensions, where, for example, student-centred learning systems encourage ethical, decisive, innovative, adaptable and reliable graduates who aspire to blend the strong sense of African family responsibilities and values with both individual and wider social responsibilities. There are professional development initiatives for faculty staff to encourage a 'new pedagogy' that emphasizes active student involvement in an experiential, lifelong learning process where students are independent and able to challenge the status quo. Lifelong learning as a philosophy and approach for staff and students, and for the building of local, national and regional learning communities, is growing as part of the dual discourses of the 'knowledge economy' and of 'democratic and active citizenship'. CUE in Africa suggests directions for the transformation of higher education (and its diverse institutions) in their exercise of social responsibility to citizens and societies both locally and globally.

Movements towards this require enabling policies, funding, planning, expertise on the ground and relationship-building to sustain such operations. There is a need for a more coherent national higher education policy, which is translated into institutional policy and structural arrangements, for which institutions are held accountable. These structures require sufficient institutional authority in order to work across faculties and schools in coordinated and influential ways. There need to be incentives from national governments to encourage the integration of community engagement with teaching and research. It cannot be left to 'the market' alone. Relationship-building within institutions, within countries and within and across broader regions is imperative for building and strengthening CUE communities of professional practice. Top-down and bottom-up strategies are required to position CUE in Africa. This includes both high-level international acknowledgement of the importance of universities to the strengthening of societies through collaborative practices, and local 'organic intellectuals' who are activists on the ground.

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Inside View IV.2.1
Community–university engagement in South Africa

Jerome Slamat

In the introductory section of this paper, a brief historical context of South Africa and its development challenges is presented. In the second part, a systems-level view of community–university engagement in South Africa will be offered. The third section puts forward a view of community–university engagement at the individual institutional level. In the next part of the paper, a discussion follows on what is needed to go beyond existing practical arrangements and conceptual approaches, and in the final section, pertinent conclusions and final comments are made.

INTRODUCTION
South Africa has a bitter legacy inherited from its colonial and apartheid past. All aspects of life, including higher education, are somehow shaped and directed along its current paths because of this history. The euphoria of the advent of black majority rule in 1994 was tempered by the realization of how huge the task would be to address the widespread poverty, inequality and unemployment that is the plight of largely the black majority. It was incumbent on the Mandela administration and subsequent administrations to intervene to address the huge backlogs experienced by black South Africans. Over the nearly two decades since 1994, a succession of developmental plans (the Reconstruction and Development Plan, Growth, Equity and Redistribution Policy, National Development Plan, and