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Title: - The Historical Trajectory of the Future in African Higher Education

Abstract

The role of African higher education institutions has been embedded within the socio-economic and historical contexts of the continent. Understanding the nature of African universities, their roles in African societies, and their place in the global knowledge system demands comprehensive reflection of the historical trajectories of the sector itself. In order to re-imagine the future of African higher education, it is important not only to reconstruct the past by uncovering facts but also to deconstruct it by challenging the nature of established truth on which historical evidences are created. The paper provides a thorough analysis of major trends, developments and challenges that the sector has been facing through time with the intention of reimagining and constructing the notion of a new or alternative future that addresses the recurrent challenges of the sector. The notion of creating the new African university carries a fundamental inquiry asking: 'What it means to be an African university?' 'What role do they play in African societies?', and 'How do African institutions manage to strike a balance between the individual, social and corporate responsibilities interacting with their stakeholders? 'How can we design African universities that are optimally structured and calibrated within African contexts? What mechanics should be laid to deviate from the traditional Eurocentric system of education to a more pluralistic or inclusive epistemic tradition that accommodates African heritages and knowledge systems? This paper reflects on the historical trajectories and critical challenges facing the sector that have been negatively impacting the pace of realising the desired future.